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Audiovisual Translation and Multimodality: What Future?

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Abstract

The future is always difficult to predict, but certain elements can help us anticipate what tomorrow could look like. Today, in different societies, multimodality thanks to digital technology is becoming a dominant format of communication. Therefore, the traditional Western concept of translation is challenged while technology creates new needs and expectations and opens up space for new practices. In fact, because of this rapid technological development (i.e., the digitalization of tools), certain concepts used in Translation Studies (TS) must be revisited: I will refer here in particular to text, sense, authorship, translation unit, and quality (and the variety of evaluation criteria in audiovisual translation/AVT). AVT, with its complex system of signs, is a relevant example in this new media landscape: its map shows a dynamic research field. It will also be questioned to a certain extent while the borders of TS are moving with the borders of a significant number of other disciplines.

Keywords

audiovisual translation, multimodality, quality, research methods, text, translation

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1. Introduction

In the last few decades, the translation landscape has been transformed, with new technical tools, new user behaviors, new relationships with verbal communication and new perceptions of translation – a task long-considered as subaltern, invisible (at least in Europe) and today practiced by a host of people, whether qualified as translators or not. Communication, encompassing oral and written interactions, is becoming increasingly multilingual, multimedia, multimodal, multicultural, multipurpose, and multi-authoring, with impacts on linguistics, culture, media, education, literature – and translation. Conventional key terms such as language, dialect, news, social media, culture (and its various forms: counter-, cyber-, emergent-, sub-, youth- and visual-, to name a few), ideology, community, power, etc. require updates and adjustments.

More attention in Translation Studies is now given to media. Media is here intended in its broad meaning – not only including newspapers, audiovisual devices and products (TV, DVDs, CD-ROM, Internet, mobile/smart phones, tablets, movies etc.) but also advertisements (printed and online commercials, video-clips etc.) and the different types of material in support of corporate communication, tourism information, entertainment (e.g., videogames, webseries, webtoons etc.) and scientific popularization (printed matter, brochures, leaflets, websites etc.). In addition to audiovisual translation (AVT), other fields have begun to give rise to research, for example, the translation of information, and more generally what is called journalistic translation (Davier & Conway, 2019), transcreation or translation into advertising (whose media have diversified since the 1970s and 1980s), intersemiotic translations, as in museums. But our focus here will be on AVT.

2. Multimodality

For a long time in the West, text and translation were perceived by their linguistic dimension alone. Thanks to text linguistics and semiotics, verbal communication has become more complex, to the point of taking on a multimodal dimension. Henceforth, modes of meaning or systems of signs contributing to meaning are seen as combining (and not as adding to each other), at the level of design, the production of a text as well as at the level of its distribution, its reception (Holz-Mänttäri, 1984).

While R. Barthes (1964) saw, in the study of an advertisement for pasta, a hierarchy between the verbal and the visual, with the multimodal approach, no priority is given a priori to one of the modes co-present in a text. These modes, like color, are also now recognized as having their own traditions and conventions (Kress & Leeuwen, 1996/2006; Kress, 2010).

A main mode can incorporate various sub-modes. Thus, music can include rhythm, melody, harmony, orchestration. Or a speech can be clarified with volume, intonation, voice quality, speech speed, pauses, as the static image can also be defined according to its colors, light, composition, or perspective.

Multimodal texts are not new, even in cultures with strong literary dominance. Indeed, a printed literary text can play on its typography (type and size of characters), its margins, its illustrated cover, the use of colors, and the presence of images, to name a few. Other examples include textbooks, user manuals, websites, comic books, games and video clips, blogs, operas, songs, advertisements, technical texts,

tags providing information about paintings in a museum, medical brochures, tourist brochures, lectures accompanied by slides, and audiovisual texts. All these texts, concerned with receivers, have often been called "adaptations" in Translation Studies rather than "translations" (limited to a textualist, linguistic vision). Multimodality thus covers a wide variety of texts and forms of communication and can now be associated with many types of translation and localization (Jakobson, 1959; Reiss, 1971). Modes of meaning (or semiotic codes) and materiality or medium/support of texts (which are not to be confused with the notion of book) have their own history and socio-cultural impact. A play can be printed, a performance on stage, a radio or television or cinematographic offer; a film is multimodal and can be multimedia (on a cinema screen, mobile phone, tablet, or on a DVD); a print magazine, as well a radio show, is multimodal and mono-medial (they can only be read/watched or heard). Kaindl (2013, pp. 261-262) has thus created a typology of translations according to whether they are intramodal (with a single mode), intermodal (with several modes), intra-medial (on a single medium), intermedial (based on several media) – each case can also be intra-cultural (captured in the same culture) or inter-/transcultural (between different cultures). The eight types strongly highlight the diversity of translations today, made possible by digital technology.

3. The map of audiovisual translation today

For a better understanding of the place and the challenges related to AVT, let us draw a map of the development of AVT over the last three decades (Figure 1). Reception here falls under "accessibility", assumed here in its broad meaning, i.e., aiming at all kinds of audiences and not only people who experience disabilities. Accessibility allows anybody to achieve specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specific context of use, and allows communication to go beyond any social, cognitive, age, gender divide and mental, sensory, or physical impairment.

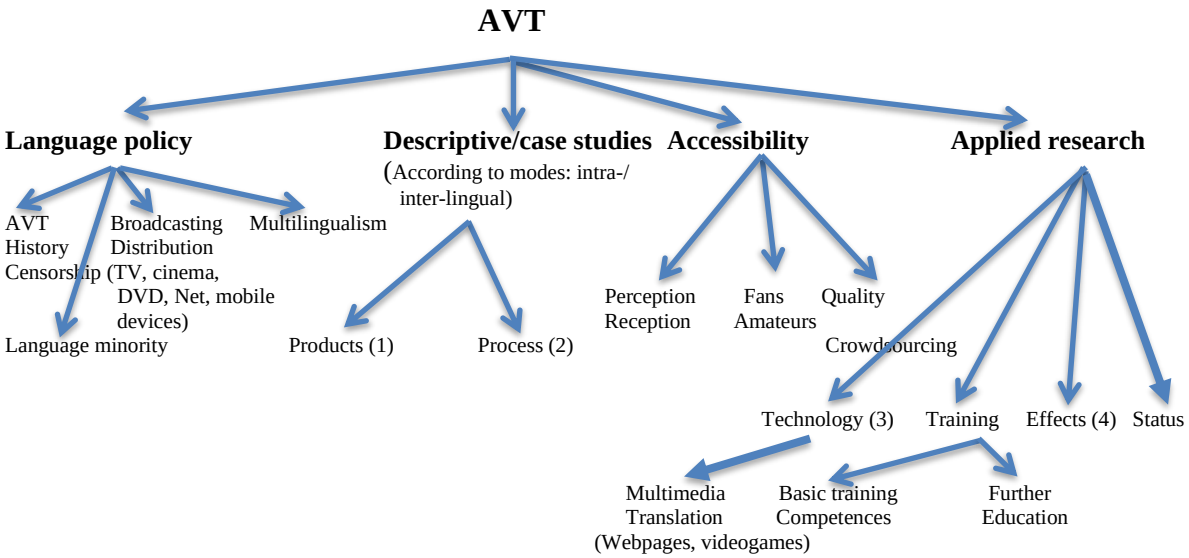

Figure 1. The map of the development of AVT over the last three decades

1) Contributions focusing on "problems" (humor, swearwords, terms of address, discourse markers, language register, cultural items, etc.) and/or "constraints" (impact of the oral code, genres, space, and time constraints, etc.).

2) Include studies on strategies, norms, conventions, the translator's voice, technical constraints, from script writing to dialogue, interplay visual/sound/verbal, etc.

3) Automation and impacts on productivity and quality, working conditions, fees, ethics, copyrights, etc. Digitization and changes in production, distribution, broadcasting, etc.

4) Effects on reading skills, reading habits, language learning, stereotypes, etc.

The four different subfields in figure 1 imply certain types of research approaches and/or tools. Thus, *Language policy* can offer historical, political, economic, and commercial perspectives while *Descriptive studies* means linguistic, pragmatic, narratological, cognitive, multimodal, imagological perspectives and case studies. With *Accessibility*, we have socio-cultural and ethnographic perspectives, among others. And *Applied Research* means technical, professional, legal, and educational perspectives.

We can view several challenges in AVT, through the holes of the map:

- How to compile, align, annotate *corpus* (parallel or not) of film subtitling? Very few exist today, such as Fortlix1, the TRACCE corpus, the Pavia corpus of film dialogue. How to set up a corpus of AD scripts, film archives? All corpora raise the issues of their representativeness, transcription, copyrights, meta-information for AV media. Corpus could impact research in automation and could help create correlations AVT strategies and film genres.

- Would observation of subtitlers be relevant for better understanding their decision-making process, taking into consideration all the different verbal and non-verbal signs on screen? A *psychosomatic approach* is still open.

- *History* of AVT. Often history is limited to repetitive arguments, such as political concerns in the studies on censorship during dictatorships in the 20th century, forgetting the weight of illiteracy then among popular audience. What about early screen translation practices, about domination of a certain mode of AVT in certain societies? Why and how does re-dubbing, re-subtitling take place?

- *English* as a source lingua franca in the international exchanges of films, TV programs and series (scenarios and pre-production scripts) and a langue-pivot for templates in subtitling.

- *Sociolinguistic role* of the translators towards minorities, in the command of native and foreign languages.

- More *Reception Studies* are required to develop a better understanding of new patterns of media participation in an ever-increasing mediated multilingual environment.

- *Processing images* (hardly ever altered when broadcasted, released) in both viewing and translating. How to define density of visual information? How to prepare the translators when digitization change images to be shown? Would they translate images as well? But also, how to identify and retrieve images in databases of film archives?

- *Automation*: To what extent could Machine Translation help translating a volume of AV products which are increasing every day? Would *open sources tools*, such as Subtitle Workshop 6.0, DivX Land Media Subtitler 2. 1.2, Avidemus 6.6.8, enhance the work and increase the number of amateurs?

- What could be the role of the translators in reproducing, adapting, manipulating *stereotypes*, clichés, and representations regarding nations, genres, races, or minorities?

- What new *theoretical references* could better describe and explain subtitling, AD, dubbing, etc.? How could Relevance Theory, Frame Theory, or Appraisal Theory be used in AVT?

4. Implications of AVT for Translation Studies

Several TS concepts should be rethought, revised, and extended when applied to AVT. We have grouped them together into three subsections.

4.1. Text, sense, and authorship

When, in a conference, a literary translator, a subtitler, a conference interpreter, and a localizer refer to "text", do they mean the same thing? Do they refer exclusively to the conventional text as a linear arrangement of sentences, or as a sequence of verbal units? Does the interpreter forget the orality, the speed of delivery, the mixture of impromptu discourse and the reading of the ready-made paper? Does the audiovisual translator forget that his "text" is maybe based on a novel (which may also be a translation), that he/she has worked from a dialogue list, watched the dialogues embodied in moving images? The screen is not only full of linguistic elements. Does the localizer forget that the source "text" was never finalized when the translation started, the source "text" was updated several times during the localization process? Does the website to be translated apply the seven criteria of textuality: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality? (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). The webpages are largely decontextualized, read in discontinuity by receivers with many different backgrounds and shared knowledge. In other words, the concepts of text and sense made of written lexical and morpho-syntactical devices must be revised or re-defined according to the settings and the materiality of the "text". From the historical process of delineating words, creating paragraphs, punctuation and lay-out to the interconnections between aural, oral, and visual modalities that are gaining far greater cultural prominence today, the "text" has gone through various shifts and translators have moved beyond text-to-text translation.

New formats were gradually disseminated thanks to new technology (e.g., emails, websites, SMS (short message services), chats, tweets, blogs etc.) calling for crowdsourcing and online collaborative translations. The usual concept of "text" and the interaction between text, author, reader, and translator began changing. Literature itself has cyber-formats, mixing text and media; poetry can be performed

(see slam, rap), read in public or presented in a visual exhibition. This transition from the "graphosphere" into "the video-sphere" is also becoming obvious in translation and interpreting, with the localization of videogames and the different modalities of AVT. What could be the new concept of text? (Toury, 2006).

There are differences between a text by Cicero and Virgil (to be read aloud during a public event) and a text by Proust, between a literary text, annual reports, and instructive texts even if they are all physically limited and semantically open, while hypertexts are both physically and semantically open. One does not read an electronic text without additionally referring to an interview on YouTube, a public lecture, or a map. As one does not watch a film without watching a video-clip, a trailer, or rushes beforehand. Two users can open a website with the same webpage but can end their navigation after opening different links. Three decades of the Internet and Web, including AV products, have transformed a concept which was dominant for thousands of years. From now on, "texts" are fluid, with other "texts" and other system of signs (fixed or moving images, graphs, colors, fonts, sounds, etc.). A "text" has become poly-semiotic or multimodal and exists in a permanent intertextual relationship with other "texts". While printed texts could always be dated, allocated to an author, editor or printer, digital/AV texts can be constantly updated and offered in different versions. The same uncertainty exists in news translation in which the absence of an identified source text is more frequent than not: the translation might be based, for instance, on the oral version of the speech although there is a written text. To track back to a source text can be time consuming and make collection of a corpus difficult.

Today, researchers on multimodality insist on the importance of taking into consideration the multiple modes of sense-making. Let us take the example of the multimodality of a film: 14 semiotic codes are part of the production of meaning (see Table 1).

Table 1. Semiotic codes of a film

	Audio channel	**Visual channel**
Verbal Elements **(signs)**	- *linguistic code* (dialogue, monologue, comments/voices off, reading) - *paralinguistic code* (delivery, intonation, accents) - *literary and theatre codes* (plot, narrative, sequences, drama progression, rhythm)	- *graphic code* (written forms: letters, headlines, menus, street names, intertitles, subtitles)

Non-Verbal Elements (signs)	- special sound effects/*sound arrangement code* - *musical code* - *paralinguistic code* (voice quality, pauses, silence, volume of voice, vocal noise: crying, shouting, coughing, etc.)	- *iconographic code* - *photographic code* (lighting, perspective, colours, etc.) - *scenographic code* (visual environment signs) - *film code* (shooting, framing, cutting/editing, genre conventions, etc.) - *kinesic code* (gestures, manners, postures, facial features, gazes, etc.) - *proxemic code* (movements, use of space, interpersonal distance, etc.) - *dress code*, including hairstyle, make up, etc.

To those 14 codes can be added "objects" (with designer imprint or branding) which participate in the funding of the movies and influence the viewers because of their emotional and symbolic connotations. Consider drinks and cars in the James Bond films, for example. All the codes are placed in a subtle relationship during the editing (montage). In the system of mixing signs, the verbal elements fulfil different functions: the translators must take them into account before deciding what to omit, condense, or make more explicit when subtitling the dialogues.

The complexity of the AV is also reflected in the concept of sense or meaning. Sense results from the interaction between signs on the screen, between those signs and the different stakeholders of the film industry, and between them and the viewers. The conventional hierarchies between producers and editors are shaken up when the "same" film can be different after the work in the cutting room, if it is planned for certain cultural audiences, certain age groups, and/or certain conditions of showing (in a cinema theatre, as a video, in a DVD format, for a flight audience or for TV channels). The final cut, with today's new technology, can depend on producers, film directors, parents, religious associations, ideological groups (who prefer politically correct projection and bowdlerized versions). A film such as *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999) has not been distributed as a single version in the U.S.A, New Zealand, Australia, the U.K or the Netherlands because of the alteration of several sexually

explicit scenes during post-production or because of the verses cited from the sacred Hindu Scripture *Bhagavad Gita*. Rating systems are part of censorship. A film such as *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979) is another example with alternative versions, regarding the ending: the 35 mm general release version is different from the network television version, the extended version released in 2001, and the final cut shown in April 2019 – the runtime fluctuating between 2h30, 3h20 and 3 hours, respectively.

What about the concept of *authorship*? In literary studies and TS, the author is often perceived as a single individual. For a long time, the prevailing concept of authorship in literary history focused on authorial intention and originality. In AVT, the issue of authorship cannot be overlooked, since a few groups or institutions are part of the process (screen writer, producer, director, actors, sound engineers, cameraman, editors etc.). The list of credits at the beginning or end of a film is always long, encompassing intellectual and manual workers (e.g., hairdressers, carpenters, and electricians). This diversity of stakeholders manifests the diversity of semiotic signs in the meaning-making process. We may note here that in Translation Studies, different voices can be heard now in the translating process – no longer a simple face-to-face meeting between the author and the translator but a complex network of agents (literary agent, publisher, editor, copy editor, reviewer/reader, reviser, cover designer, proof-reader, typesetters, critics, librarians, booksellers etc.). In relation to authorship and voices, one can mention authorship, translation, and copyrights. From the Berne Convention (1896) to the new European Directive dated 2019, writers, artists, performers, academics, publishers, data compilers etc., are all protective of their intellectual, moral, and financial rights. Their works can be translated, adapted, arranged, broadcast, reproduced, distributed, and performed in public but only under certain conditions in order to avoid plagiarism, pirating, or copies. Within the film industry, one must realize the difficult definition of a co-production with many agents from different countries and professions (and therefore the difficulty of accessing funding) before understanding how sensitive the problem of rights really is.

4.2. Concepts of translation and translation unit

In parallel with the concept of AVT, other labels challenge the traditional Western concept of translation as a transfer and a search for equivalence. New practices, stimulated by technology and users, co-exist, and call for new denominations, such as:

- *Localization*, used first in the computing industry for software and websites and then in the videogame industry.

- *Adaptation*, for a long time in use in competition with translation, as soon as the focus is on the receiver and not on the source text, for example for comics, drama plays, children's books, advertisements, and tourist brochures. Those adaptations (or sometimes transadaptations) refer to texts with still images or music and often tackle the concept of manipulation and self-censorship.

- *Transcreation*, used in the marketing and advertising industry, mainly to underscore the creativity of international campaigns.

- *Language mediation* or how, in different multilingual and multicultural settings and between people, a change of languages occurs, a kind of code-switching that is not always controlled by a formally qualified translator or interpreter. *Translanguaging* can relate to language mediation, when multilingual speakers, using their languages in certain contexts, navigate complex social and cognitive demands by strategically employing their languages. Such a practice can take place in schools, bi- or plurilingual families, or marketplaces in a multilingual city, among others. English as a lingua franca can be one of the languages in translanguaging.

- *Transediting*, used in the print media to make clear that journalists do not "translate" but look for accuracy of information over faithfulness to the source text (if any), keep in mind the target readership and story readability, always under time pressure.

- *Multilingual technical writing* used when one writes documents in several languages from pieces of information or data (often available in English).

- *Co-drafting*, for example, of legal texts that are both legally binding.

The list is not exhaustive and does not apply everywhere at the same time. Nevertheless, it confirms that translation cannot be conceptualized by a monolithic and universal term. This diversity occurs not only within a given framework (i.e., transfer), but also with old terms in a geo-cultural area (such as mimesis, appropriation, and imitation in England, France, and Spain) and in the concepts used yesterday and today in different spaces where translation is defined as explanation, substitution, metamorphosis, or "turn around".

In interpreting, the changing practices in media settings (not only radio and TV but festivals as well, for instance) – in simultaneous or consecutive mode or with sign language – are also under scrutiny (Pöchhacker, 2018).

In addition, one should not forget media adaptation or format licensing and remakes. Game shows, reality shows, and sitcoms can be internationalized for multiple markets and produced in a new version tailored to the new audiences.

In short, within the various media, translation can be understood in different ways, because there are new types of texts, new types of relations between so-called originals and target texts and because the translation process implies the producer of the source text, the translator, and the audience (users, readers, viewers). AVT, news translation and other forms in practice contest the equivalence paradigm in TS and demonstrate why the term "translation" can be misleading.

Very often, the lay person thinks of translation in the equivalence paradigm, or the quest to convey identical meanings. The aim is to achieve a text in the target language that is "of equal value" but a word or concept may connote different meanings in another language or may be absent altogether, so the relationship between the two languages is not necessarily symmetrical. Two words may also refer to the same object, and this would not necessarily convey the intended meaning of the original text. Loyalty to the source text may result in a text that is not easily comprehensible in the target language. Some people would criticize a translation because certain words have not been replaced – thus, the famous set phrase: "Traduttore traditore". This focus on the lexical similarity of texts, however, does

not allow one to consider, describe, and explain the translation decisions and the translated output. The distinction between what is manifest (literal, direct, surface-level) and what is latent (implicit, connotative, underlying) 'misreads' the process of translation, and relegates the translator's act of interpreting the content to a task of relative obscurity.

Within TS academic studies, however, the equivalence paradigm has been criticized since the 1980s; translation theories and conceptual frameworks have shifted to include a more contextualized and socio-culturally oriented conception of the translation process. Translation has been reframed as a form of intercultural interaction. It is not languages that are translated, but rather texts that are socially and culturally situated. Within this "cultural turn" in TS, several perspectives have contributed to the critique of the long-standing equivalence paradigm – Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 2012); the *Skopos* theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013); and cultural politics (Venuti, 2018) – among others. Translation is thus viewed as a process of re-contextualization, as a purposeful action. The entire decision-making process is bound to considerations that involve the client end-receiver. Meaning is no longer considered to be a mere invariant in the source text but rather as culturally embedded, with a need to be interpreted. If scholars agree upon this broader definition of translation, which could become an umbrella term for many practices, why do we use a string of new labels?

Despite decades of academic and professional translation research, the traditional parameters configuring the equivalence paradigm persist. When scholars translate survey questionnaires, when foreign businesses discuss contracts, and viewers watch subtitled TV programs, or when language teachers use back-translation, they all rely heavily on the equivalence paradigm. Viewed from this perspective, translators are non-existent; they are passive agents, with no voice, no empathy, no subjectivity, no reflexivity, no interpreting skill, no intercultural awareness, and no qualifications, all in complete opposition to those practices described above in which translators rely on the communicative and cultural context, the objectives and functions of the translation and the target receivers. In our transition period, when digital technology is transforming texts and translation, two main concepts of translation are competing: one based on printed verbal texts (dominant since the C15th in the West), the other based on multimodal texts.

What about *translation unit*? When one subtitles or dubs, what does he/she translate? The concept of a translation unit has been defined in various ways – sometimes as the smallest verbal segment of utterance, sometimes as a unit of sense gathered from a small number of words, sometimes as a functional piece of the text combined with elements scattered in the text, sometimes as the whole text (Ballard, 2010). All those definitions are based, explicitly or otherwise, on the equivalence paradigm. Beyond this concept of a translation unit as a linguistic unit, within product-oriented research, characterizing source-text–target-text pairings with a focus on lexical items, some scholars from a process-oriented stance have defined the translation unit as a textual segment acting as cognitive input – such a source segment varies as one progresses through a text (from a single word to a word group, a clause to a sentence) depending on the translation modality (written vs oral), the text type, the translator's strategy, and possibly the ready-made segmentations provided by computer-assisted tools (e.g., translation memory software and concordancer). Whatever the theoretical framework, the translation unit always refers to verbal production. But what happens when the text is multimodal, when the meaning to be translated is dynamic, made of multiple semiotic signs? Focusing on words

and sentences can be methodologically convenient, even if it seems pointless to define a single linguistic unit. Translation and interpreting (encompassing localization, transcreation etc.) are based on a myriad of source segments, as AVT for instance pinpoints. Matters become more complex when non-linguistic signs are mixed with linguistic elements. In other words, when one subtitles, the source "text" is not the dialogue or any other linguistic item on screen but all the signs together: it is because of the interplay between verbal, visual and sound that one can decide what to omit, condense, simplify or add in the subtitles, assuming that the viewers infer from all the signs, and not only from the two lines at the bottom of the screen, the meaning of a shot and sequence. When viewers watch a film, they have a holistic approach; when subtitlers start their work, they have an analytical approach, maybe more systematic when they are novices and more routine when they are professionals. In all cases, the rhythms of the plot, the action, the dialogues, and the subtitles must coincide, the rhythm being the "binder" between all the signs. A subtitle that is too cognitively demanding at a moment when the plot is progressing rapidly disturbs the viewers and their reception of the film.

4.3. The concept of quality

There are different views and models of translation quality assessment which presuppose a certain conceptualization of translation. Most of them, based on a relationship between source and target text or a relationship between textual features and their perception by the translator, are framed within the equivalence paradigm. Many approaches focus on text (as a verbal entity), neglecting the purpose and context of the translation, as well as the different agents involved in the process, as if quality were an intrinsic characteristic and not at stake in the relationship between the commissioner, the client, the translator, the receivers, and the text to be delivered. See Gouadec (2010) who makes a distinction between the quality of a product and the quality of the transaction (the service provided).

Again, as with the concepts of text and authorship, quality assessment and control are challenged by localization of software, Machine Translation, AVT, and crowdsourced translation workflows, among others. The productivity of the translator and the type of material to be translated have changed and are still changing. A long life-span text, a highly perishable document, the raw output of a Machine Translation and a finalized and published text cannot be assessed in the same way, with the same set of evaluation criteria. In addition, quality can be assessed throughout the translation process: before signing a contract (how would the translation be able to meet the requirements of the commissioner?), during the work (to check that certain decisions are adequate for the purpose of the translation), and after the project (is it necessary to revise the translated text?). Quality (because it correlates with the time available to the translator and to the fees) takes place when planning, allocating tools and resources, recruiting freelancers, ensuring a return on investment, and measuring the impact of change.

In other words, and clearly true of all the media sectors (e.g., news translation and AVT), quality depends on a collective organization, including the client (buyers: news agencies, TV channels, film importers and distributors, and end users: readers and viewers), the language service providers (AVT companies) and the translators (staff, freelancers, outsourced agencies, subcontracted translators, and amateurs working online). Quality has many different parameters: external (needs and expectations of the stakeholders) and internal (related to organization, management, and competences). This complexity is summarized in Figures 2 and 3:

Figure 2. Types of qualities in AVT

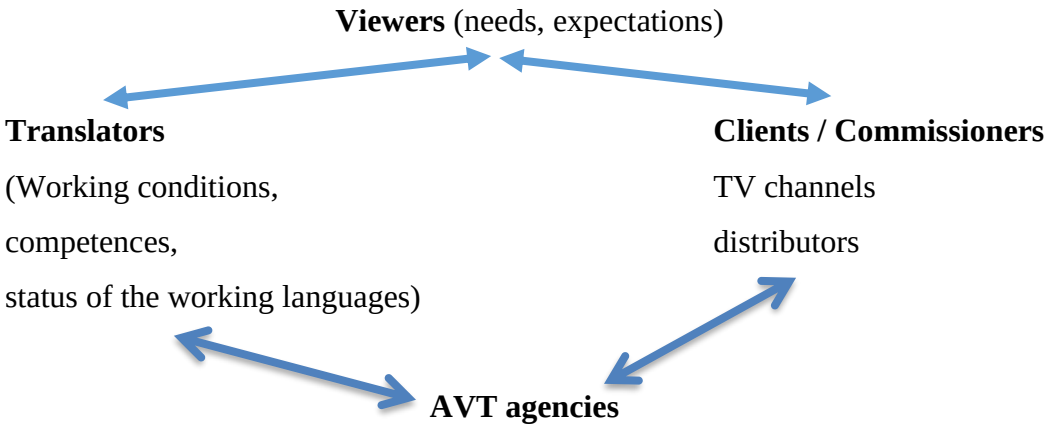

Figure 3. Quality and stakeholders in AVT

Beyond the set of linguistic criteria as exclusive evaluation criteria, AVT follows new challenging criteria. Among them, accessibility is a key word in AVT, not only as a legal and technical issue but also as a concept that shakes up the dominant way of assessing the quality of a translation, the aim being to optimize the user-friendliness of AVT, software, web sites and other applications. It covers a variety of features in relation to subtitles including:

- *Acceptability*, related to language norms, stylistic choice, rhetorical patterns, terminology.
- *Legibility*, defined in terms of font, position of the subtitles, subtitle rate.
- *Readability*, also defined for subtitling in terms of reading rates, reading habits, text complexity, semantic load, shot changes and speech rates.

In relation to dubbing, voice-over and free commentary:

- *Synchronicity*, including lip-synchrony (appropriateness of the speech to lip movements), syllable articulation synchrony, kinetic synchrony (utterance in relation to the gestural and facial expressions), iso-synchrony (synchronization of duration of what is said to what is shown in the pictures), and audio- or voice-synchrony (a voice, understood as vocal type, tone, timbre, pitch of the voice, prosody, accent, that matches the personality of the visible actor).

Common to both modes:

- *Relevance*, in terms of what information is to be conveyed, deleted, added, or clarified to not increase the cognitive effort involved in listening or reading.

With such predominant criteria, the usual ones (accuracy, appropriateness, and coherence) become secondary and even minor if the time and space constraints have priority. This is confirmed in reception studies dealing with different modes of AVT and using different research methods. With other multimodal texts, other criteria can be applied: for instance, *singability* for songs, operas, and musicals, and *speakability* and actability for theatre. Multi-semiotic "texts" move away from the equivalence paradigm and a purely linguistic view of translation.

4.4. Research methods in multimodality

What are the research methods on multimodality? A sketch of these methods is useful to complete the panorama that we wanted to draw of this booming field. Three types can be distinguished: methods based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1978), those based on the exploitation of a corpus and those reception oriented (Tuominen et al., 2018). Obviously, audiovisual translation cannot be reduced to multimodality alone. Other approaches to AVT exist, such as the descriptive, pragmatic, empirical (observation, experimentation, testing) or even historical one.

The three meta-functions distinguished by Halliday (ideational, interpersonal, textual) have been used in many works. However, such an analysis often risks becoming monomodal, as verbal-non-verbal interaction (visual, acoustic) is a real challenge if the modes are not taken together from the outset. About corpora, we must recognize that these in AVT are few and often little provided in titles (see section 3). Without even insisting on copyright problems, these corpora then raise many questions, such as representativeness, compilation, alignment, metadata associated with a plan or sequence and their non-verbal elements, necessary annotations, to make the analysis feasible and understandable. In addition, the problem remains on how to facilitate the segmentation of AV text from 24 frames per second into (multimodal) analysis units. As for research on reception, which has recently become more popular, it is often "cumbersome" to conduct: how do we treat translated multimodal texts or, in other words, how do we read, interpret, and memorize them? What are the stimuli to consider? What is the role of redundancy in our understanding of talking images that scroll? What types of inference are used from certain visual, sound, verbal data to make sense? We must not specify only the types of reception (Gambier, 2018, pp. 55-57) but also the variables we are trying to measure, knowing that all the variables interact with each other, making it dangerous to isolate only one of them (e.g. the speed of reading subtitles at the expense of reading habits, age and education level of the viewer, characteristics of subtitling (scrolling speed, font size, readability on the screen). In any case, there are various offline (questionnaire, interview, focus group) and online (such as the use of eye tracking) ways to measure various aspects of reception.

5. What future for AVTS?

Moving beyond text-to-text translation, scholars have begun to explore different kinds of translation – text-to-image, text-to-music, image-to-text, and text-to-dance, to name a few. For them, the very terms

text, translation and other similar forms have become inadequate for describing the full range of interactions involving the production and transfer of meaning in fluid genres. If we consider texts embedded in other systems of signs, the future of audiovisual translation studies (AVTS) could be integrated as depicted in Figure 4:

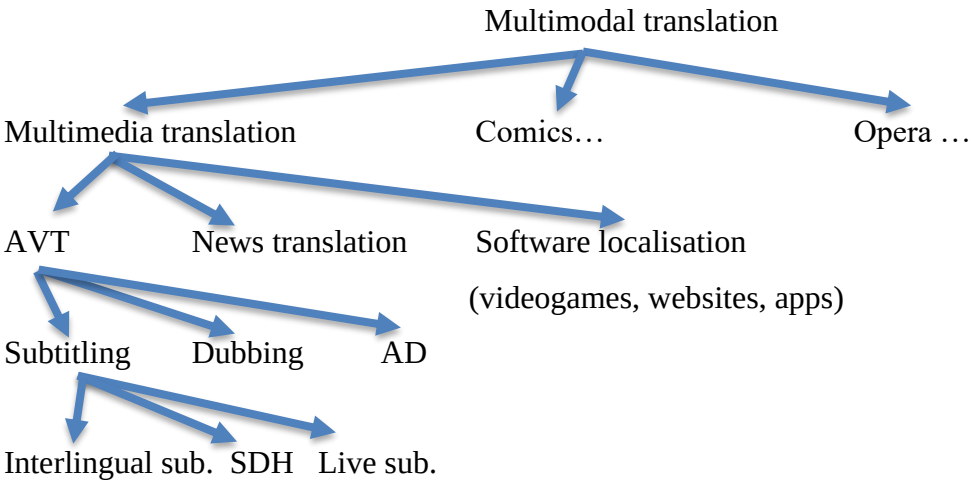

Figure 4. Future position of AVTS in multimodal translation

TS are twisted regarding three sets of questions:

> 1) Those coping with its scope and object of investigation: "translation". But what does it mean when many labels are supposed to describe the wide range of practices today that are found in different cultural areas, and there is an on-going debate concerning whether intralingual translation is part of TS? The proliferation of terms designating the linguistic-cultural transformation for which "translation" would once have sufficed is indicative of a conceptual disruption, of the communication value being added to the nodes of a burgeoning global-wide network and of the expansion of competences required from "translators".
>
> 2) Transformations today demand an increasingly transversal approach. Notable examples are climate change, sustainable development, cognitive sciences, artificial intelligence, public health care, bioethics, gerontology, and human-machine interactions. Obviously, the rapid changes in technology open new priorities, specializations, and communications which blur several borders. In such a perspective, do we have to maintain separated *Translation Studies, Adaptation Studies, Intercultural Studies, Transfer Studies, Media Studies, Knowledge Management, Internet Studies, Web Science,* and *Globalization Studies*, just to name a few research domains which also handle communication in its broad sense[1]? This does not mean that TS should or would swallow up neighboring disciplines. All of them acknowledge the complexity of communications and behaviors and deal with them to some extent, but they still

[1]. These disciplines are, in principle, partially interrelated but separated as academic disciplines, if not as university departments.

tend to ignore translation, as if information, data, knowledge, and documents could be delivered in seconds around the globe without translations!

3) In Translation Studies today, two paradigms are evolving. On the one hand, there is the more conventional conceptualization of translation which has endured for centuries through the equivalence paradigm and has evolved into one that is more oriented towards the public – audience targeted. This is the 'cultural turn' paradigm. It exists concurrently with another changing paradigm, one which reflects the platforms and mediums through which the activity of translation is now being carried out. In this sense, the paradigm of the book (upon which the paradigm of equivalence is based) transforms into one that is digital and of the Web (where the text to translate becomes multimodal). This double clash of paradigms is happening now and explains why Translation Studies has doubts about its identity, hesitating between a fragmentation into "turns" and a consilience of concepts and methods.

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African Literature in Translation: Towards Adopting a Minor Translation Theory

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Abstract

Building on a comparative literary analysis of two translated African short stories, this article examines whether culture-specific metaphors and symbolisms effectively enrich the texture of a translated text or detract the reader from following the narration. Then, it takes into account critical reception of such culture-loaded stories, for developing an effective translation theoretical framework. Considering that the source texts are written in Arabic and Amharic, both Semitic languages with long literary traditions, the article particularly sets out to adopt a translation approach that focuses on power and means to keep their literary and cultural integrity. The decision to adopt Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature as a basis for translation theory is highly influenced by Reta's, the Amharic author's Hitsinawinet narrative theory. The maze-like framework that Hitsinawinet uses is inspired by the concept of 'rhizome' to effectively map out the complex and fragmented history of Ethiopia. The first draft of the Amharic translation is done based on a translation framework formulated by adopting the concept of rhizome as a map. This concept enables constant modifications, incorporating readers' views through focus group discussions. These complementary methods can facilitate a broader, more dynamic depiction that does not undermine the integrity of the source text.

Keywords

African literature, comparative literary analysis, translation theory, Arabic, Amharic

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1. Introduction

This article is based on a comparative literary analysis of two African short stories. *When Will You Come?* (2008) is a short story originally written in Amharic by the Ethiopian author Adam Reta and translated into English as part of a PhD research in translation studies. *The Girl Whose Birds Flew Away* (2016) is written in Arabic by the Sudanese author, Bushra al-Fadil, and translated by Max Shmookler. It won the Caine Prize, the most prestigious prize for African writers in English, in 2017. It is published in the anthology *The Book of Khartoum* that was awarded a 2015 PEN Translates Award.

The aim of this analysis is twofold:

1. to investigate if metaphors, symbolisms, and intertextual references effectively enrich the texture of the translated text or detract the reader from following the narration.
2. to consider the critical reception and translator commentary of such culture-loaded stories, for developing an effective translation theoretical framework.

Both stories are based on distinct African literary traditions and have several intertextual references. Neither Ethiopian literature in Amharic nor Sudan's literature in Arabic easily fall into the major/minor, dominant/dominated dichotomy. When viewed independently both these indigenous African literature have the making of a major literature. In terms of size of speakers, an estimated 150 million people speak Arabic as a native language in North Africa with regional dialects. After Arabic, Amharic is the second largest Semitic language in the world with approximately 60 million speakers. In terms of history, both literatures have over a thousand years of literary tradition. However, the major/minor dichotomy is not a fixed condition, but one of becoming; in the language power dynamics when translated into the global dominant language, English.

Both Reta's Amharic and Al Fadil's Arabic stories relate to love at first sight, told from a young man's point of view in an African urban setting. The Sudanese story ends in a tragedy, while the Ethiopian story ends with a farce. Both stories use stream of consciousness as an effective narration technique that depicts communal perspective but at the same time makes the stories disjointed. Collective utterance is one of the characteristics of minor literature. So, naturally this technique disrupts the dominant form of English language narration.

The Sudanese story is set in a bustling market in Khartoum where the protagonist found himself attracted to a beautiful woman. The woman walks through a market center with her younger sister. He follows them. Unlike the other voyeurs, he tries to strike a poetic conversation with her. Over the following days, a friendship is established between them. The end is however filled with violence.

2. Critical reception

The Girl Whose Birds Flew Away begins with:

> There I was, cutting through a strange market crowd – not just people shopping for their salad greens, but beggars and butchers and thieves, prancers and Prophet-praisers and soft-sided soldiers, the newly-arrived and the just-retired, the flabby and the flimsy, sellers roaming and

> street kids groaning, god-damners, bus-waiters and white-robed traders, elegant and fumbling. And there in the midst, our elected representatives, chasing women with their eyes and hands and whole bodies, with those who couldn't give chase keeping pace with an indiscrete and sensual attention, or lost in a daydream. (p. 41)

A reviewer from Goodreads, a social network for readers says:

> The opening of the short story that won the 2017 Caine Prize for African, and a few other passages in the story read almost like a rap. It is a rather delicious, almost dreamlike story of a man who sees two girls, probably an older and younger sister. He is so entranced; he follows them, trying not to frighten them. The older one seems almost magical. I saw her: soaring without swaying, her skin the colour of wheat – not as we know it but rather as if the wheat were imitating her tone. She had the swagger of a soldier, the true heart of the people. And if you saw her, you'd never be satiated. I said to myself, "This is the girl whose birds flew away".

The reviewer wonders what *This is the girl whose birds flew away* signifies. Although he finds the symbolism interesting, he has no idea if the storyteller meant that she was carefree and had escaped harm or something completely different.

Another reviewer comments:

> Metaphors strew the text, but I think they are bad. It felt to me as a piece of work written to be literary but failing. It tries too hard. English words are not used correctly. Symbolism abounds, but in such an abstruse manner that readers unfamiliar with Sudanese culture will not understand. Notes refer to Sudanese mythology and history. The notes were inadequate for me.

This reviewer almost sounds offended. Comments such as "want to be, but failing", "it tries too hard" "incorrect usage of English", "abstruse", "unfamiliar" indicate the desire to maintain Western hegemony. Paul Bandia (2006) notes in discussing the translation of Ngugi's "Matigari Ma Njiruungi" from Gikuyu: "if the English translation fails to call attention to the Gikuyu language and its intricate relationship to its culture, then for all intents and purposes Ngugi's work is still being read in relation to the dominant European tradition" (p. 376). In other words, a translation that prioritizes seamless English use (for the sake of readers like the one cited above) undermines culture-specific references, denying the source text's originality.

The contrast between readers' views of the story comes out more sharply in the podcast Literary Roadhouse (2018), where four readers discuss "The Girl Whose Birds Flew Away" in a half hour-long program. One of the discussants said he read it four times and he was left "feeling stupid". When asked why, he said it was not much of a story. This implies, not only did he not understand the cultural references but also the narrative structure. The second discussant said, "it was decent". The other two liked the story because it was different. They particularly appreciated the cadence, the rhythm, and even the repetitions in the story telling. From these remarks one can surmise that the main difference between readers in this case is "attitude". Those who have preconceived assumptions about what a story should be like; in terms of structure, literary tools used, and narration style, are those who failed to appreciate the story.

In a BBC 4 podcast hosted by Olly Mann (2020), Ann Morgan, who read a book from every country in the world to broaden her reading horizon, lists reasons why this may be challenging to many people:

a) unfamiliar culture can be daunting for fear of ending up feeling frustrated or stupid, at failure to understand it
b) dreading hard work; the time spent to research background history or context

Literary professionals and industry can play a crucial role publicizing strategies to deal with these challenges and become enthusiastic about hearing different voices;

a) getting comfortable with not knowing everything. It is possible to read a book without understanding every word. This willingness leads one more step towards re-evaluating one's belief because it opens a window to multiple perspectives, which gives a more complete worldview than the partial colonial narrative.
b) shading one's preconceived assumptions helps to overcome the inclination to dismiss things we don't understand. This helps to overcome the "authenticity trap", which in fact is a trop of publicity channeled to people based on their identity in which their own ideas are reflected back at them. The publishing industry has exacerbated this problem, with their insistence of book covers reinforcing stereotypes. The marketing industry's algorithms also push the same themes a person has read or watched.

The valuable readers' insights above will be duly considered in the research methodology to formulate a suitable translation framework. As the Amharic story has not been published yet, there is no critical reception available for it. Instead, the translator's commentary will be used for analyzing the text, alongside the research supervisor's feedback.

3. Translation commentary

"When Will You Come?" is set in a residential area in Addis Ababa. A boy finds himself attracted to a girl who is watching a football game with her friends. On his way to a football practice on another occasion he strikes a conversation with her and manages to arrange a date with her. The story ends with a farcical failure to accomplish this plan.

The story has a similar expressive opening as the Sudanese story:

> with the vitality and aptitude that booms during that fresh age of adolescence;
>
> we devised a cunning plan, interwoven with artistic fibs to fool the grown-ups,
>
> to veil the eyes of the elderly with deceit;
>
> those who have lived for forty years on this Earth…
>
> those who have travelled long on a time's journey…
>
> those who were suckling on their last resolve with waning energy. (p. 1)

The translator deliberately chose to keep the sentences in the above paragraph drifting and broken as the original text. The author chose very unusual onomatopoeia to describe the energy that thrives in adolescence - so the translator chose to translate it with a corresponding English onomatopoeia, "booms". The rambling sentence structure and unusual phrases are features of the maze-like framework of Hitsinawinet theory, an original Ethiopian narrative theory developed by the author, Adam Reta. Hitsin is a Ge'ez word which signifies spaces between letters in a given word structure. Based on the concept of Hitsen, as gaps within a text, Reta formulated Hitsinawinet as a framework of gap filling using the interconnected events in a story. For example, in "When Will You Come?" Reta uses forty-five international and local intertextual references to enrich his writing. International football stars like Maradona, and artworks like Mona Lisa feature in similes:

> I begged Korerima with my eyes to come along. I silently implored her; 'come on my caramel; let me chase after you instead of a ball, let me be your love-playmaker. A number 10 like no other, a Maradona. (p. 3)

> Although Korerima's body language communicates fear and avoidance, I focused on her eyes. My eyes caught a hint of a smile that she was trying to conceal from her mouth (like Mona Lisa). (p.2)

While some of these intertextual references are real, others are imaginary. For example, the artistic discourse given as an interview is fiction. Not only that, but the artist in the story also refers to an imaginary written work (which is furnished with a fictitious author, publishing house, year of publication and number of pages). At the end of the anthology there is a separate list of "fictitious intertextual references" to avoid confusion. The aim of Hitsinawinet narration style is therefore to fill the inevitable gaps within a story via branching out new interconnected stories. Intertextual references serve as a suitable tool to interconnect stories. Reta believes this structure is best suited for rendering the complex fragmented history of Ethiopia:

> The 1974 Ethiopian revolution initiated the beginning of the death of the linear story. The fragmenting elements unleashed then are still working their way through all aspects of life. A society in chaos/disharmony cannot give you individuals that are comfortable in linearity. I have to look for ways to represent such realities and processes. The conceptual image or geometric metaphor we acquire from such disorder is a labyrinth or a maze. (Dessalegn, 2012)

The decision to keep this disjointed structure in translation destabilises the Standard English form. This is precisely why readers accustomed to the dominant English narration styles find such stories either as refreshingly unique; "like a rap, delicious, dreamlike" as the first reviewer of the Sudanese story put it, or "bad, abstruse" as the second reviewer found it.

The narration of what started off as a love story in "When Will You Come?" changes to artistic discourse via the interview, entirely narrated as footnote. This is a subversive technique emulating the branching out of rhizome framework in narration. The artist in the interview uses several intertextual references as well as cultural metaphors to put his point across. See the example below:

> In an insulated society like ours that is not only polarized but also unprogressive; research should be a priority. Or at least go back and review our ancient integral knowledge. Let's study Zera Yacob, our own 17th century philosopher. That is what my 'Eighteen' collection does on a small scale. So, to me, gursha isn't a simple act. Through it, I see the path my culture has followed; its strengths and failures. Gursha to me is like a canon. (p. 9)

In the above text, the translation had to compensate for the reference to Zera Yacob, by introducing the historical figure within the text (a 17th century Ethiopian philosopher). The reference to "The Eighteen" art collection is fictitious. The definition of Gursha; "feeding a loved one an injera wrapped morsel, to show affection" was initially put as a footnote. Even though the translator advocates for contextualization rather than footnote use, the fact that one Amharic verb required eleven English words to contextualize, merited the exception. However, at a caution from the research supervisor about the importance of the translator taking a firm stance, it was later put back within the text. The decision to keep the original Amharic term is made because of the way it is used as a root cultural metaphor. The shift in storyline as well as genre; from childhood romance written in prose to artistic discourse as an interview, also demonstrates the heterogeneous nature of narration that hitsinawinet enables.

The following paragraph effectively shows the translation decisions made in order to resist vulnerability created by power dynamics. The translator made a concerted effort to balance the need to keep the distinct qualities of the original text with making the translation comprehensible.

> I haven't started sprouting any beards yet. Her boobs (Korerima's) are just forming, sticking out like pointing fingers to the left and right, without a slight sag. I've heard people say, that the burden of life and age makes boobs vulnerable to the Earth's gravitational forces. Just like the saying; a fallen tree is an easy victim for many axes. As a clean-faced youth, I know nothing about such mysteries… I'm just recalling what people say. Nevertheless, there will come a day when she, (dear Korerima, named after "black cardamom") will have to go through this. (p. 1)

Despite the risk of appearing didactic, the translator initially defined the girl's name on a footnote, as the context was significant to the narration. With regards to syntax, the author deliberately used fractured sentences and unusual vocabulary to disrupt the normal Amharic narration form. The translator also deliberately kept this subverted style to defy the dominant forms of the English language. For example, in the original text, the author used the third person pronoun "her", twice and put the girl's name (Korerima) in a bracket, as an afterthought. The translator did not alter this unusual choice, but taking earlier feedback into consideration, included the context of the girl's name within the bracket instead of a footnote. The deliberate choice of the word "sprout" instead of "grow" normally used in the case of "beard" was also maintained in translation. There had also not been any attempt to substitute the proverb about "a fallen tree" with a similar English proverb as the meaning can be inferred with the literal translation. This is a risk the translator had to take, as there is a potential that readers may not get the symbolism as in the case of "The Girl Whose Bird Flew Away". Such insights in translation decisions highlight the need to bring about shift in readers' expectations.

4. Etymology of translation

Both Arabic and Amharic are Semitic languages. The eminent translation studies scholar David Bellos (2011) notes the fact that the word ästärgwami in Amharic and mutarjim in Arabic originated from the Ottoman (a language from ancient Mesopotamia, where writing originated) word tercüman for "translator" is proof for the antiquity of the practice.

The Arabic term tarjama has three central and interrelated ideas:

- explanation or interpretation,
- transformation into a different medium, and
- clarification by means of division into sections and labeling (Brustad, 2001, p. 42)

The Amharic word for "translation" tirgum also has similar connotations as the Arabic tarjama. This background on the nature of Amharic concept of translation demonstrates that Western translation theories, which focus on language transference, are not conducive. As Tymoczko, another translation studies scholar aptly explains, "the transfer metaphor implicit in Western conceptualizations of translation undermines the self-reflexivity and empowerment of translators" (Tymoczko, 2007, p. 7) and thereby make translators implicit to promoting the values of the dominant powers.

That is why her colleague Michael Cronin (2003) rightly asserts that translation theory should not be seen as technical aspect reserved for academics of major languages but as a vital method to understand the position of minority literature practitioners in language and power interactions.

5. Adopting a theoretical framework

With this context in mind, this researcher was motivated to explore a suitable theoretical and conceptual framework that enables translators from minor language literatures to have the power and means to keep the literary and cultural integrity of their source text. With a background in translation studies as postgraduate researcher and an Ethiopian heritage, one of the most particular concerns for the researcher was the possibility of the Amharic text being subjected to English standards during translation. This concern was because English, a globally dominant language with imperial roots, may dominate Amharic, a national language with independent heritage, if the wrong translation framework were to be used. In this regard, asymmetries of power between the two languages becomes the main issue.

Amharic literature delves into its rich linguistic, literary, and cultural resources from as far back as its ancient empire days. Earlier Ethiopian manuscripts during the Axumite Empire mostly during the 7th century were religious texts translated from Greek to Ge'ez. However, the emergence of original Ethiopian Ge'ez texts particularly Kirbre Nagast (Glory of the Kings), written 1314-1322, played a crucial role in legitimizing the Solomonic dynasty (Gerard, 1981). Although translation served a significant role in the foundation of earlier Ethiopian literature, standard Western translation theories would likely subvert literary translation from contemporary Amharic fiction. This is because earlier works were predominantly religious texts meant for teaching or illuminating. Contemporary fiction on the other hand is culture loaded and uses original narrative structures that need to be preserved. That

is why there needs to be a politics oriented literary translation theory and framework suitable for Amharic translation: one that can adequately handle a balance in the power asymmetries between languages.

When adopting a translation theoretical framework based on political engagement Tymoczko (2000) proposes an approach that centers on "power". Hence, the choice to adopt Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari "minor literature" as a translation theory to deal with the issue of Amharic becoming a minor literature during translation. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari (1986) explain that "a minor literature is not related to a minor language; rather it is what a minority constructs within a major language" (p. 16). Minor literature is therefore political and collective in nature and deals against asymmetries of power between languages with resistance. They further explain, when people have to use a major language that is not their own, their literature should allow to challenge the language and making it follow a revolutionary path. This shows that the major/minor dichotomy is not a fixed condition but that of becoming, when it undergoes through different language functions and centers of power.

The three characteristics of minor literature according to Deleuze and Guattari are:

a) the deterritorialization of the language
b) the minor writer is part of a collective or has collective utterance
c) the political nature of the literature

Both stories when translated into English have these three characteristics. Although Arabic is a dominant regional language and Amharic is a dominant national language, they both become minor literature through translation into a dominant global language.

As a practical tool for political effectiveness, Tymoczko (2014) proposes the choice of texts for translation by itself as a political act, and the need to willingly manipulate them during translation. Choosing Reta's short stories for the translation is a deliberate political act. The Ethiopian revolution of 1974 started with a popular urban uprising that overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie I, the two hundred twenty-fifth and last of the Solomonic dynasty. The following thirty years were marked with violence as the interim government tried to establish an autocratic Socialist party-led rule. Reta's Hitsinawinet theory is an innovative response to effectively capture the fragmentation of the Ethiopian society caused by the revolution, through subverting the formal linear forms of narration. His stories have all the characteristics of minor literature. They are therefore conducive to be translated based on minor translation theory, which primarily focuses on power resistance.

Reta best captures his Hitsinawinet concept in a cultural root metaphor of "Injera". The numerous holes of injera; the national bread, signify visible and invisible spaces and their connectivity. He explains; "the unique Ethiopian fermented bread is round and appears flat, yet it is three-dimensional. It is solid, yet soft and spongy. The holes on it seem like monads, and yet they are all interconnected through a maze" (Dessalegn's interview with Reta).

Inspired by Delueze and Guattari's work (1987) in *A Thousand Plateaus,* Reta adopted the "rhizome" to his hitsinawinet theory. This structure allows "...a network, a spider's web" (p. 29).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a book written as a rhizome allows, “heterogeneous multiplicities, that is, each is composed on innumerable elements co-existing in simple mode of relation possible...” The aim of the rhizome framework is therefore “to survey its tendencies or becomings, for the better and for worse” (p. 37). Based on these concepts, Reta particularly adopted four characteristics of the rhizome for his narration theory.

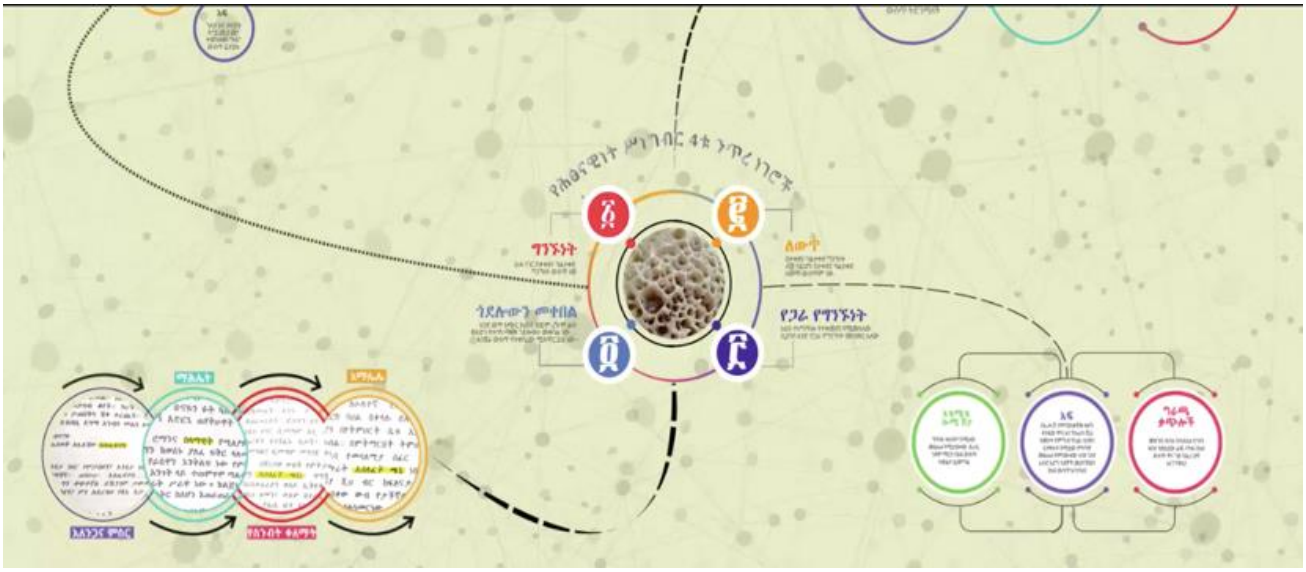

Figure 1. Interconnectivity in Adam Reta Books: ሕፅናዊነት Hitsinawinet Infographics

The middle figure with image of injera, as root metaphor shows the four characteristics of Hitsinawinet narration framework:

1. Connections; intentionally or unintentionally everything is linked;
2. Change; intended or not, everything inevitably goes through change;
3. Interconnection; seemingly unrelated things are interconnected at least by one link;
4. Gap filling; for a text to be successful one needs to acknowledge the inevitable gaps within the text.

The figures on the left and right show how stories can be interlinked through fictional characters resurfacing to branch out into other stories. He similarly adopts rhizome as a conceptual framework to construct multicursal; maze-like stories that best depict Ethiopia’s fragmented society. For example in “When Will You Come?” half way through the story, the young protagonist recalls an interview his father gave to a journalist. His father is a famous visual artist mentioned in at least two of Reta’s other short stories. By taking a fictional character from a previous story to be the father of the protagonist in this story and by including an interview form entirely told as a footnote, the author not only forms interconnections but weaves an entirely different story. Hence he manages to render fragmented stories branch out from one story as a rhizome.

Tymoczko (1999) cautions that translators of a literary text to a dominant target culture are obliged to make cultural materials explicit and define potentially unfamiliar cultural materials. This process affects the movement and it is associated with surrendering in the language power dynamics. This

potentially compromises the literary status of the text, making it appear more didactic than imaginative literature.

In "The Girl Whose Birds Flew Away" most cultural references are explicitly defined at the end. For example:

- "What a devilish afreet she was."
- "Have you forgotten that Khalil Farah was one of singers?"

At the end of the story eight cultural terms were defined including "afreet", which is a Sudanese mythical creature, and Khalil Farah, an anti-colonial Sudanese poet. This requires the reader to go back and forth to find out the meaning, which breaks the flow of the reading. In-text contextualization would have been a better option in both these cases.

In carrying out literary translation from a politically motivated and deliberately subverted minor literature to a dominant form of global language, an ethical approach must be framed that does not compromise the integrity of source literature for the sake of conformity to English standards. This may at times involve choosing to maintain opacity of certain culturally specific realities, and disrupted syntactic forms, which naturally destabilize the dominant forms of English.

The adoption of minor literature translation framework enables the translator to maintain a balance between Reta's subversive style, and rendering a coherent, compelling story in the English as it is in the Amharic.

As Claramont (2017) rightly points out, the translators in this scenario have an ethical responsibility. Their role is not to find equivalence, but to make complex decisions about when to become malleable or defiant, in order to resist vulnerability created by power dynamics. The minor translator primarily has the responsibility for conveying the sociolinguistic effect of the source as well as making conscious decisions to maintain a discourse of resistance against power dynamics including social inequalities.

The need to have heterogeneity in minor translation is therefore what makes the adoption of rhizome as an important conceptual framework for minor translation. As Deleuze and Guattari deduced in *A Thousand Plateaus*, rhizome as a conceptual model is ideal for establishing perpetual connections between semiotic chains and power dynamics in various areas of study.

The minor translation theory primarily focuses on the concept of the rhizome as a map and not a tracing like Chomsky's structured model. Deleuze and Guattari assert "what distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real" (p. 13).

6. Translation theoretical framework: Research methodology

The translation of "When Will You Come?" is done based on a translation framework formulated mainly by adopting the concept of rhizome as a map. "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation" (p. 12). In order to hone this theory further, a research is underway. This nature of a map, which enables

connectivity in all its dimensions, and "susceptibility to constant modifications" is also adopted in the translation theory. The research methodology therefore seeks to incorporate views from many dimensions including publishers and marketing perspectives. Most importantly, however, it takes on Bandia's (2012) recommendation; for an effective communication of a text, one should draw a "parallel between the author, the translator, and the reader, who are linked by the heterogeneity of their experience". Accordingly, the research methodology includes:

1. incorporating readers' perspective via focus group discussions, involving a group of Amharic and Arabic translators from Emerging Translators Network and Ethiopian Translators Network. As highlighted by some reviews of the Sudanese story, readers need to detach from prior assumptions about the universal use of the standard form of the English language in translation, and instead open themselves upto many different versions of the English language;
2. incorporating the author's views and perspectives via interview;
3. comparative literary analysis of translated texts originally written in;
   a) an official national language: Amharic
   b) a major regional African language: Arabic

Compensation and contextualization techniques are frequently used in the experimental translation, to help make sense of the fragmentation of a rhizoid story. However, minor translation should by nature be heterogeneous and experimental as signified above by the concept of rhizome as a "map". So, the outcome of the research will be used to hone a second draft. This is followed by further refinement of the theoretical framework and a final version of the translation.

This approach effectively utilizes the practical translation and theoretical components, by enabling each to inform the other.

These complementary methods facilitate the space for creating a broader, more dynamic representation that captures the complexity of the source text. The broad methodical representation in this research also requires an active and engaged reading process to grasp translations from indigenous literary cultures.

To conclude, cultural metaphors, symbolisms and intertextual references effectively enrich a translated text. However, the translator of a minor literature has the responsibility of conveying cultural norms of the source by contextualizing them. This is essential in order to balance the dynamics of power between the two languages, while maintaining the subversive narration styles and certain opacity of the source text. The proposed minor translation theory and framework enables heterogeneous and experimental translation as signified by the concept of rhizome as a 'map'.

The outcome of the suggested research will be used to hone the proposed theory, as well as a recommendation to initiate change in the literary industry. This complementary method will facilitate a broader, more dynamic representation that depicts the complexity of culture-loaded and subversive source text in translation.

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The (In)visible Agency of Video Game Localizers in Iran: A Case Study Approach

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Abstract

The sociological study of video games from the perspective of Translation Studies is a largely uncharted territory. The present study seeks to address this gap by shedding light on the (in)visible agency of video games translators. It achieves this through highlighting the concept of interactivity as the distinctive feature of video games. To this end, four Persian localized video games were selected as the corpus sample. The games were of different genres to account for the varying degrees of interactivity in game genres. Upon textual analysis, the cases of translators' (in)visible agency were identified and categorized. The findings suggest that video games translators exerted visible agency to clarify game references, increase comprehension, provide commentaries, and reflect on their translation strategies. Furthermore, translators' invisible agency was primarily directed at clarifying both verbal and non-verbal information encoded within the semiotic configuration of video games. These findings are discussed considering different game situations and hence varying levels of interactivity.

Keywords

agency, invisibility, Iranian translators, localization, video games, visibility

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1. Introduction

The localization industry has played a pivotal role in the mainstreaming of video games as one of the most popular mediums of entertainment (Bernal-Merino, 2015). A successful localization depends to a great extent upon aligning the product with the socio-cultural values of the target market (Bernal-Merino, 2015). To make a product acceptable in the target market, the translators are granted a quasi-absolute freedom to reproduce the experience of the players of the original game for target market players (O'Hagan, 2007). The act of exercising this freedom has been described as transcreation (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006).

Interest in the study of video games from a translation perspective was fueled by an initial surge of interest in the practice of game localization in the mid-2000s (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). Replete with culture-specificity at various levels (Pettini, 2021), video games need to be studied from different perspectives. Thus far, research on game localization has focused on the challenges of translation (e.g., Bernal-Merino, 2008; Mangiron, 2007; Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006), strategies for translating these interactive audiovisual products (e.g., Fernández-Costales, 2012; Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006), and the reception of localized video games (e.g., Ellefsen & Bernal-Merino, 2016; Fernández-Costales, 2016; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2020). However, outside of a few studies (e.g., Zhang, 2012; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2017), the application of sociological approaches to the study of video games translation has been neglected. Video games translators have largely been ignored as well (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013).

Of the many sociological approaches to game localization, the (in)visibility of video games translators is of particular interest. As already stated, for a localized product to succeed it needs to provide target users with "the look and feel of locally-made products" (Fry, 2003, p. 5). To achieve this aim, translators are encouraged to seek equivalence at a functional level (Di Marco, 2007) so that the resulting translation is as distant as possible from translationese. This begs the question, what are the possible circumstances for the visibility of translators within the context of game localization, and to what extent do translators enjoy agency in practice? This particularly stands out when approached from the light of the practices followed throughout the localization process, on the one hand, and the role that interactivity plays in video games, on the other. The current exploratory research is an initial attempt to understand the cases unique to video games in which translators turn visible. Furthermore, upon identifying the relationship between the game situation and the level of interactivity characterizing it, the study outlines the practices that video games translators could employ to exert their agency either explicitly or implicitly.

In what follows, the practice of game localization in Iran is contextualized along with the relation between the very nature of this practice and translators' agency. Furthermore, the concept of interactivity has been discussed as it is the most striking and distinguishing feature of video games. After highlighting the theoretical aspects of the research and the adapted methodology, the results are presented based on the themes emerging from the analyzed games.

2. Literature review

2.1. Game localization in Iran

The popularity of video games has been on a steady rise around the world, and Iran is no exception. According to some reports, there are 32 million video game players in Iran (Digital Games Research Center, 2019), turning it into a potentially lucrative market. However, the Iranian market is often not a primary target for game developers. This could partly be due to the US sanctions on Iran, making game developing companies reluctant to offer services to Iranian users (France24, 2021). Furthermore, Iran's non-signing of the Universal Copyright Convention has led to increased software piracy in the country (Šisler, 2013). However, the lack of acknowledgement of copyright laws does not mean that intellectual property is totally ignored in Iran. If a domestic company is licensed by an owner company to distribute a product in the country, there are legal measures in place to prevent illegal distribution of that product by unauthorized sources (Ahmadi, 2015). If no official licensing has been obtained, the usual workflow for game distribution companies in Iran would be downloading the game online and selling online and physical copies (Ahmadi, 2015).

Against this backdrop, it is of little surprise that most video games are not officially localized for the Iranian market, which leaves the field open for fan localizers to localize their favorite games into Persian (Al-Batineh & Alawneh, 2021). Two groups of agents are involved in the localization of video games in Iran: state-authorized official organizations, and unofficial localization groups. State-authorized organizations are required to obtain a publication license prior to the public distribution of games (Iran Computer and Video Games Foundation, 2019). Each game is reviewed for congruency with a range of Iranian-Islamic ideologies. The games localized by unofficial localization groups are not distributed physically in the country, rather made available for online purchase. The latter approach has been growing consistently, with several new agents having entered the market in recent years.

The activities of official game localization companies in Iran have been researched as "professional video games localization" (e.g., Jooyaeian & Khoshsaligheh, 2021). At the other end of the spectrum lies "non-professional localization", broadly referring to the fan translation of video games (e.g., Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2017). The translation of video games can be done through dubbing or subtitling. Professional subtitling does not exist as a practice within the Iranian mediascape due to a lack of professional codes of conduct, formal training, or professional associations (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2020). However, some subtitling activities are compensated which is in contrast with the uncompensated nature of fan translation. Khoshsaligheh et al. (2020) put forward the term 'quasi-professional' subtitling to account for this near-professional status. By analogy, given the absence of formal training in game localization in Iran and the lack of established guidelines and codes of conduct, no claim of professional game localization can be made. To account for this type of professional activity done by non-professionals, the term 'quasi-professional' localization has been used in the present study.

2.2. Video games translation in practice

The localization of video games must be approached from a functional perspective, one that shifts the focus from linguistic equivalence towards equivalence at the level of text function (Pettini, 2021).

Skopos theory can be used to explain the function of game localization, namely "to convey a game play experience that is as close as possible to the equivalent of the original" (O'Hagan, 2007, p. 4). Given the shift from linguistic to functional equivalence, video games translators are often granted a carte blanche that allows them to make any alterations necessary to preserve the function of the translation (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). This quasi-absolute freedom can contribute positively to the status of translators and their increased agency (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). The genre of the game in question can limit the extent to which translators are allowed to draw on their creativity. As argued by Bernal-Merino (2007), games can be divided into two types based on the level of freedom assigned to translators: those that require more research than creativity (e.g., simulation games which are heavily technical), and those that require more creativity than research.

The same distinction has been made by Pettini (2021) who seeks to define the boundaries of translators' creativity based on the relationship between the game world and the real world. Game worlds can best be described when placed on a spectrum: those that sit more on the side of realism, and those that are rooted in a fantasy world (Pettini, 2021). Furthermore, the more popular a video game, the more care should go into its translation (Bernal-Merino, 2009). O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) interviewed the translator of the *Final Fantasy* series to find out why some of the Japanese terms were not translated in the localized English version. As argued by the translator, "games in the *Final Fantasy* series often feature classic Japanese weapons from classic Japanese sources, like Murasame, and since these are part of the lore of the game, we transliterate those item names directly for the English version" (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013, p. 191). This clearly reflects how the game world can determine translators' decision-making as well as the freedom they enjoy while translating.

2.3. Video games translation and translators' agency

Translators' agency is an overlooked research area in game localization (Mangiron, 2017). The skopos of game localization presents translators with a carte blanche to tap into their creativity and produce a natural translation. In a Venutian sense (1995), this leads to translators' invisibility. If exercised appropriately, the agency of translators can turn them into powerful agents in the game localization process (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013), but ones that are nonetheless invisible due to the naturalizing translation approach typically adopted.

The term 'agency' has been approached in different ways in Translation Studies. Research on the topic has sought to analyze translators' agency both quantitatively (e.g., Paloposki, 2010) and qualitatively (e.g., Abdallah, 2010). The analysis can also be conducted at different scales. For instance, Abdallah (2010) seeks to analyze translators' agency within production networks through a longitudinal study of their workplace experiences. Another fruitful research avenue for studying translators' agency is focusing on the product of translation (Paloposki, 2010). This is the underlying methodological assumption of the present study. One of the ways to find instances of agency is tracking the translator's footprints in the translated product, in this case localized video games.

Translators' (in)visibility is one of the more widely explored topics within Translation Studies. The topic has generally been approached from two perspectives: translators' role and position in relation to the text, and translators' role in relation to clients/end-users (e.g., Dam & Korning Zethsen, 2008;

Liu, 2013). This suggests that the notion of (in)visibility can be interpreted in different ways. In line with the latter approach, Liu (2013) defines translators' visibility as "situations in which translators can directly communicate with clients and end-users" (p. 28). Forming the basis of the other view towards translators' (in)visibility, which is the one subscribed to in the present study, is the Venutian (1995) stance. Largely focused on translation into English, Venuti (1995) argues that the then prevalent perception of an acceptable translation, which was a natural sounding one, renders invisible the role of translators and gives readers the delusion that the text they are reading was originally written in their language. In Venuti's view (1995), translators' (in)visibility can be realized through two general translation strategies i.e., domestication and foreignization. Domestication is a natural translation approach which erases most traces of translators' intervention in the process of translation (Venuti, 1995, p. 5). Foreignization, on the other hand, retains the foreignness of the product and does not necessarily align the foreign text to the values and dominant ideologies of the target culture (Venuti, 1995).

The literature on translators' agency in game localization is extremely limited. Focusing their attention on non-professional translation of video games, Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2017) sought to understand the approach of non-professional video game translators, the ways in which the non-professional subtitle becomes visible, and its unique technical and linguistic features. Given the scarcity of literature on the topic, Khoshsaligheh and Ameri's study is an important step in the right direction. However, it only focuses on the work of one fan translator and his subtitling of the video recording of the storyline of Uncharted 4: A Thief's End (2016). The non-professional translator was found to have gained visibility through means such as placing his voice on the game recording, adding explanations to subtitles using brackets, and adding commentaries to subtitles (both on the game itself and his own translation). Moreover, the study treats video games as non-interactive audiovisual products by taking the game outside the interactive context in which it takes place.

The present study is an attempt to contribute to the literature by addressing the shortcomings of past research.

2.4. Interactivity in video games

Video games are multimedia and multimodal interactive entertainment products, the translation of which is not unsimilar to the translation of children's books, productivity software, and non-interactive audiovisual products (Bernal-Merino, 2008). The most salient feature of video games compared to other audiovisual products is interactivity. Video game players are no longer passive spectators, rather they control the pace of the action and are actively engaged with the game (Bernal-Merino, 2006). The level of interactivity can change in different game situations. Game situations are "different moments within the game programming that entail different levels of interaction for the player as well as a particular audiovisual configuration" (Mejías-Climent, 2021, p. 20). Table 1 outlines the different game situations alongside their level of interactivity.

Table 1. Game situations and interactivity in video games (Mejías-Climent, 2021, p. 154)

Game situation	Level of interactivity
Game action	Full interaction
Tasks	Full, partial, or no
Dialogues	Full or partial interaction
Cinematics	No interaction

Presented as a spectrum ranging from full interaction to no interaction, game action refers to situations in which the player is fully interacting with the game, hence able to perform actions such as attacking, moving in the game world, and looking around. Characterized by zero interaction, on the other hand, are cinematics and cut-scenes (Mejías-Climent, 2021). Serving as a tool for developing the plot and characters, as well as providing background information for the game story, cut-scenes are movie-like cinematic sequences during which the player has almost no interaction with the game world (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013).

Table 2. Interactive game genres (Mejías-Climent, 2021)

Combat	**Simulation**
Shooter (firearms)	Resource management
Fight (physical contact)	Sports
Beat'em-up	**Strategy**
Hack and slash	**Rhythm**
Adventure	Dance
Action-adventure	Sing
RPG	**Educational**
Survival	Serious games
Platforms	**Competition and contest**
Graphic/conversational adventure	Games of luck
Racing	Bets
Puzzles and labyrinths	

In the middle of the spectrum are tasks and dialogues. Tasks differ in terms of their level of interactivity. Examples of such game situations are interactive in-game tutorials during which players are presented with instructions and can only perform what is stated in those instructions. Along the same lines, dialogues refer to conversational exchanges between the main character of the game and the non-playable characters (Mejías-Climent, 2021). The genre of the game in question can also determine interactivity. The gaming world is rapidly evolving, and new genres of video games are being developed regularly. Furthermore, a growing number of hybrid genres have come into existence (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2021). Basing her proposed classification on interactivity, Mejías-Climent (2021) identifies these game genres in Table 2.

Given the scarcity of the literature on translators' agency and visibility in game localization and the limited scope of existing research, the present study seeks to shed light on the visibility of translators' agency in the context of quasi-professional Persian game localization. More specifically, the study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1) In what ways do video games translators exert their agency?
2) What are the cases in which video game translators gain visibility?
3) Is there a relationship between the visibility of translators' agency and the interactivity of the game situation?

It is hypothesized that the level of interactivity of the game situation in question predicts translators' visibility. In other words, the more interactive the game situation, the less visible the translator.

3. Theoretical framework

As argued by Paloposki (2010), translators' footprints (visibility) can be traced in the work they translate in the form of annotations that might appear as footnotes, typography, or text selection, among others. Closely tied to the concept of visibility, is translators' agency. The notion of agency came to the fore at the wake of the sociological turn in translation studies to account for different aspects. Sager (1994) defines an agent as someone who is "in an intermediary position between a translator and an end user of translation" (p. 321). Simeoni (1995) refers to an agent as a social presence that has a voice with a pen. This is the sense in which an agent is defined in Paloposki's work and indeed the present research. As highlighted by Paloposki (2010), translators' footprints and their decisions can become visible in the final product in the form of such annotations as footnotes (p. 89). Since the concern of the present study is video games and we are dealing with an audiovisual product, replicating Khoshsaligheh and Ameri (2017), instances of translators' visibility and agency are identified by looking at the annotations added by the translators to subtitles or other textual materials in the games.

4. Method

4.1. Corpus

Four Persian localized video games were included in the corpus sample: (1) *Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter* (2016), (2) *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017), (3) *Devil May Cry 5* (2019), and (4) *Life is Strange: True Colors* (2021). All these games have been localized into Persian by

'Gamesub', a major unofficial game localization team. The rationale behind the selection of these games was to include different genres and hence different levels of interactivity.

4.2. Data collection procedure

Both the original English and Persian localized version of the selected games were played in their entirety by one of the researchers on a personal computer. The gameplay was recorded using Aiseesoft Game Recorder for further analysis. The recorded gameplays were replayed by the researchers with the sole focus of identifying instances that were relevant to the purposes of the current research. Screenshots were captured on both the Persian localized and the original versions.

4.3. Data analysis

The instances of translators' (in)visible agency were identified drawing on Paloposki (2010), and the game situation was ascertained using Mejías-Climent's taxonomy of game situations (2021). The model draws on interactivity as the most distinguishing feature of video games from other audiovisual entertainment media. Accordingly, the model was used to identify different game situations differentiated based on their interactivity. This was to determine the level of interactivity in each instance of translator agency. Table 3 presents the details of the corpus sample:

Table 3. Games constituting the corpus of the study

Title	Production year	Genre	Developing company	Localization group	Localization year
Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter	2016	Adventure mystery	Frogwares	Gamesub	2019
Life is Strange: Before the Storm	2017	Graphic adventure	Deck Nine	Gamesub	2018
Devil May Cry 5	2019	Action-adventure	Capcom	Gamesub	2020
Life is Strange: True Colors	2021	Graphic adventure	Deck Nine	Gamesub	2021

5. Findings

In this section, the instances of translators' (in)visible agency in the analyzed games will be presented alongside the corresponding game situations. Translators had gained (in)visibility with regards to the following cases: (1) game references: explaining the references existing both within the game world and the references existing outside of the imaginative game world; (2) comprehension: adding explanations or glosses to increase the comprehensibility of dialogues; (3) commentary: translators' own comments with regards to particular utterances/occurrences in the game; and (4) reflecting on translation strategies: translators commenting on/justifying their choice of translation strategies. The presented categories emerged on the basis of the findings. The first category i.e., game references was taken from Pettini (2021). The following section will provide a detailed account of each case.

5.1. Game references

Video games are complex software products that can tell stories and build connections through references to both within and outside the game world. Pettini (2021) highlights the different types of realia (real-world and existing) and irrealia (game world and non-existing) references incorporated in video games. Of interest to the current discussion are her concepts of metaludic intratextuality and intertextuality.

5.1.1. Metaludic intratextuality

Metaludic intratextuality refers to "the (textual) relationship between the game world of the single episode in the game series and other installments of the same series, other game worlds or the world of video games and gaming in general" (Pettini, 2021, p. 92). Video games have turned into a narrative genre (Carlquist, 2002), so video game translators need to understand and convey the references established between the game world and other game worlds (metaludic intratextuality) and those between the game world and the real world (intertextuality). Figure 1 shows an instance of translators' visible agency arising as a result of metaludic intratextuality in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017).

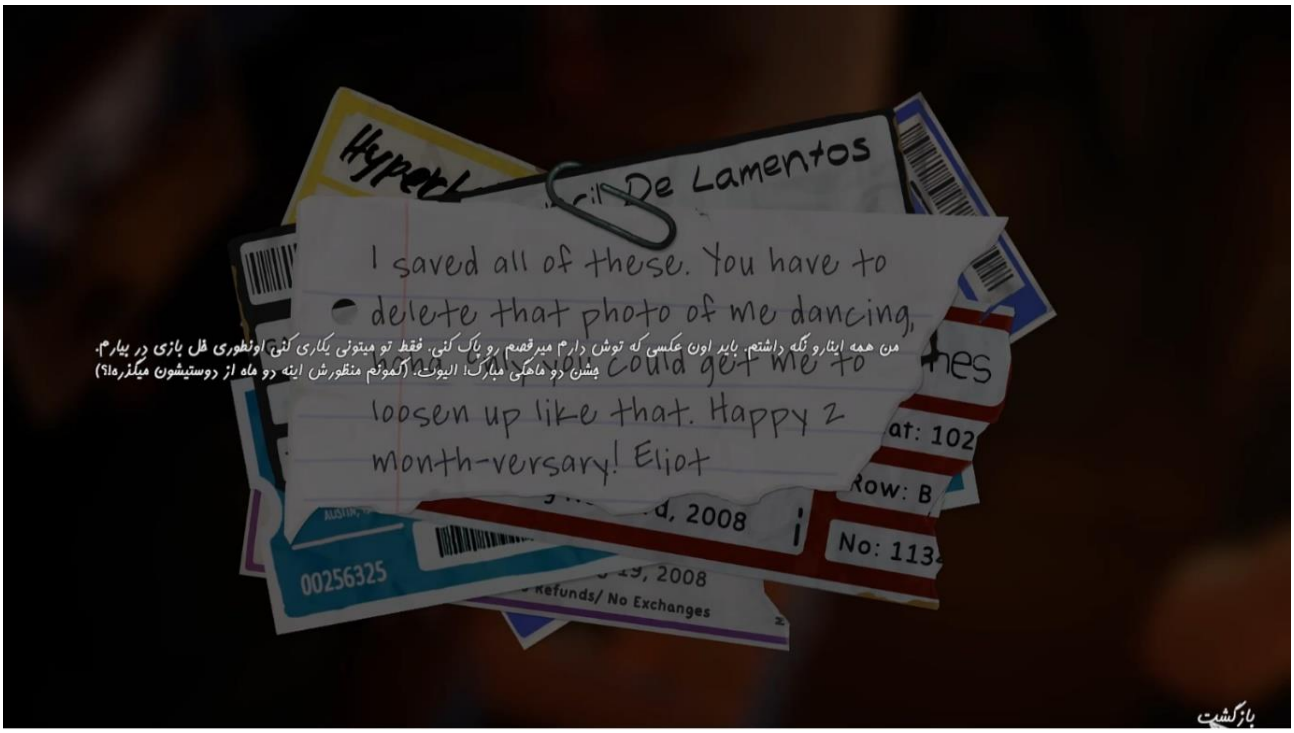

Figure 1. Translator's attempt to clarify a metaludic intratextual reference in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017)

As suggested in Figure 1, the translator has tried to clarify the metaludic reference established between the game world and the previous installments of the game. He has gained visibility by adding a sentence inside parentheses that reads "I suppose he means that they've been friends for two months?!", referring to the term "2 month-versary". In this case, even the translator does not seem to be certain about the reference, hence the words "I suppose" and the question and exclamation marks at the end.

In terms of game situation and level of interactivity, this instance can be categorized as a game task characterized by extreme partial interaction in that the player can only take one action, which is to press the 'return' button at the bottom of the screen.

5.1.2. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is concerned with "how game texts relate to and reference other texts […] through different and more or less overt devices such as quotations and allusions, and how games meaningfully interweave them with aspects of their worlds" (Pettini, 2021, p. 92). It can cover the references made in the game world to other fictional or non-fictional works that exist in the real world. Figure 2 is an instance of intertextuality in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017) leading to translators' visibility.

Figure 2. Translators' visibility because of intertextuality in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017)

Figure 2 makes a reference to a quote from Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*: "Sound and fury, signifying nothing". The translator sought to highlight this reference by adding a parenthesis reading "شکسپیر Shakespeare". Like the previous instance, the translator felt the need to clarify this intertextual reference. This dialogue appears in a cut-scene during which the player has no interaction with the game world. By adding "Shakespeare" to the end of this quote, the translator has not only become more visible, but he has also shown awareness of the cultural gap that might exist for his target audience (i.e., Persian-speaking players). This gesture can also indicate to the players that the translator is culturally competent hence more trustworthy. Figure 3 represents another instance of intertextual references in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017).

Figure 3. Translators' visibility because of intertextuality in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017)

In Figure 3, *The Pharsilia*, a Roman book of poetry, is on the shelf next to two other books. In the Persian localized version, the intertextual reference was highlighted by adding a parenthesis reading (کتاب شعر) "book of poetry". Here, the translator has concluded that the average player of the Persian localized version is not familiar with this book or its genre, so he made the link explicit.

5.2. Comprehension

In some cases, the translators gained visibility by trying to clarify ideas or wordplays. Figure 4 is an instance of this type of visibility in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017):

Figure 4. Translator's attempt to increase comprehension in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017)

As Figure 4 suggests, the main character of the game, Chloe Price, expresses contempt for her school through a wordplay. The name of the school is "Blackwell", but Chole calls it "BlackHell" to emphasize how grim and unpleasant the school is to her. She says "Hello, BlackHell". In the Persian localized version, the translator transferred the same word "بلک هل" (BlackHell) and added a parenthesis containing its literal translation in Persian. This dialogue appeared in one of the cut-scenes during which the player has no interaction with the game world.

In some other cases, the translators exercised invisible agency, for instance by attempting to increase comprehensibility without the explicit use of such devices as parenthesis. Figure 5 is an instance of translators' invisible agency in *Life is Strange: True Colors* (2021):

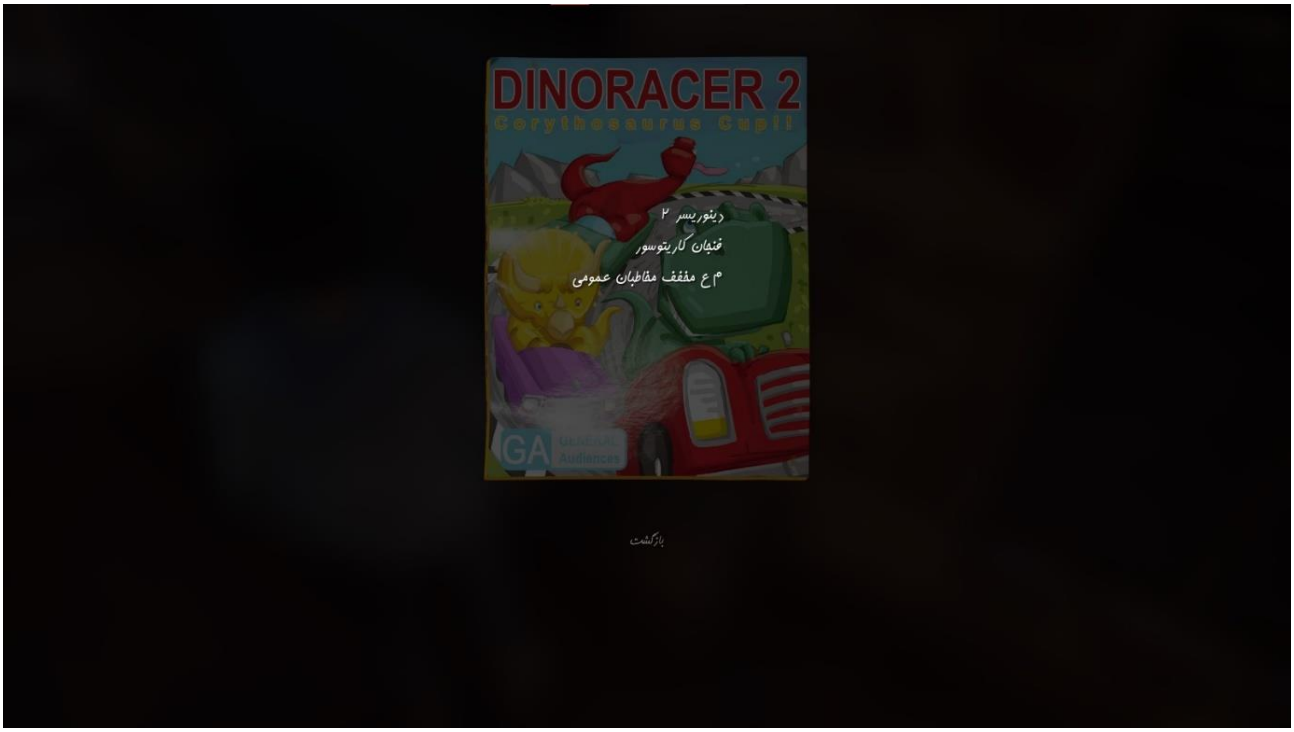

Figure 5. Translators' invisible agency for increasing comprehension in *Life is Strange: True Colors* (2021)

Figure 5 represents the cover of a video game in *Life is Strange: True Colors* (2021). Of interest here is the translation of the logo "GA: General Audience" inserted at the bottom left of the front cover. The original English version reads "GA: General Audience" while the Persian translation reads "م ع مخفف مخاطبان عمومی" (GA standing for General Audience). The translator added the phrase "standing for" instead of using colons. The addition of this word makes the text more comprehensible for the Persian-speaking player without making the translator visible. This instance might enhance comprehensibility, but it is unlikely to build trust between the players and the translator like it did in the Intertextuality example above. Whereas the last example saw the juxtaposition of an English phrase and its translation in Persian, this instance is more seamless in that the whole text is in Persian and the player is very unlikely to notice an intervention by the translator.

5.3. Commentary

In some cases, the translators had added their own commentary on the game, thus making themselves visible. Figure 6 represents an example of such case in *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017):

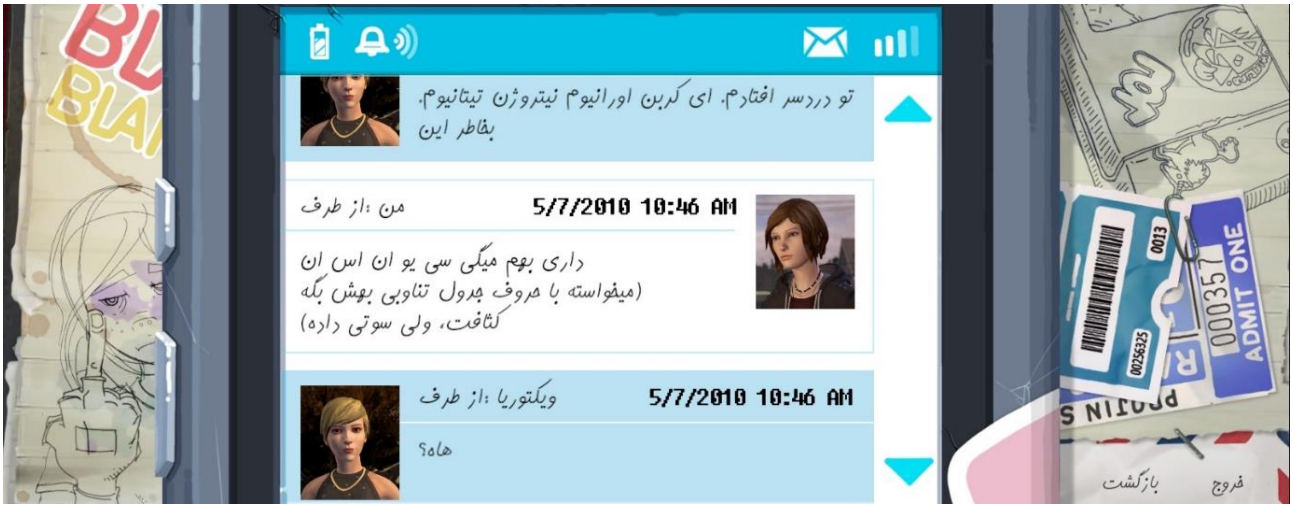

Figure 6. Translators' visibility by adding commentary

Figure 6 is part of a conversation between two schoolmates, Victoria Chase and Chloe Price. Victoria is angry at Chloe since Chloe gave her the wrong answer to a chemistry question and that very question had appeared in the exam. Here, Victoria is trying to insult Chloe using the elements of the periodic table. Figure 7 is the same conversation in English:

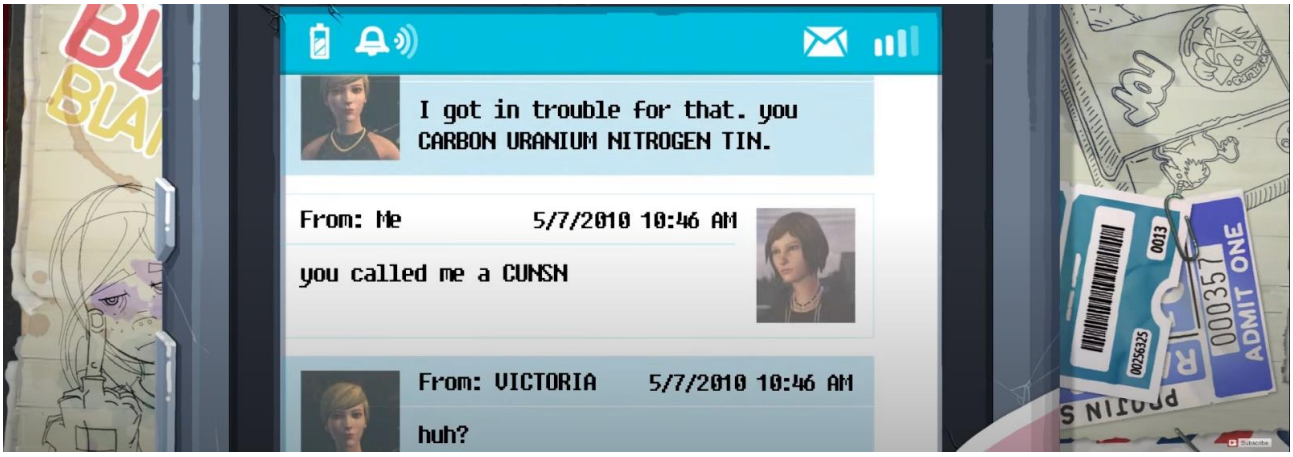

Figure 7. Translators' visibility by adding commentary

As seen in Figure 5, the translator transferred the same letters into Persian and added a parenthesis that represents two types of visible agency, namely comprehension and commentary. The text in the parenthesis reads "میخواسته با حروف جدول تناوبی بهش بگه کثافت، ولی سوتی داده" (She wanted to call her a cunt using the elements of the periodic table, but she's slipped up). The first part of this sentence is an instance of the translator's effort to increase comprehensibility by explicating, while the second part is the translator's own commentary on Victoria's failed attempt at insulting Chloe. This instance also represents extreme partial interaction since the player can either scroll up and down in the phone or press the 'return' button.

5.4. Reflecting on translation strategies

Another instance of visible agency is the translator's reflection on their translation solutions. In *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017), players are shown a poem that Eliot, one of the non-playable characters, has written for Chloe. Figures 8 and 9 are screenshots of the English original and the Persian localized version, respectively.

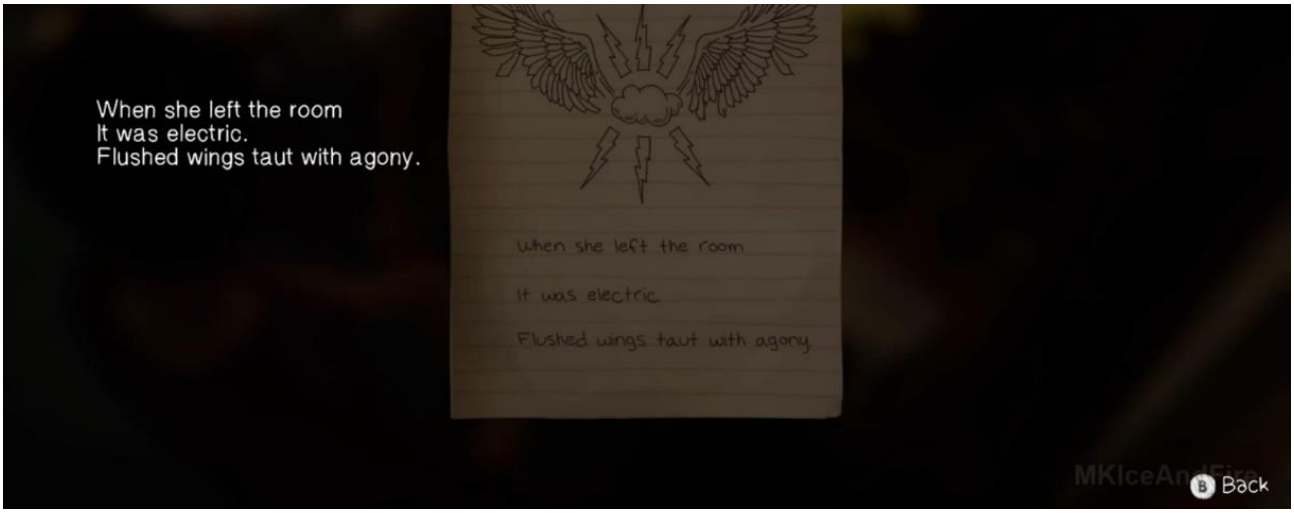

Figure 8. The original English version of *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017)

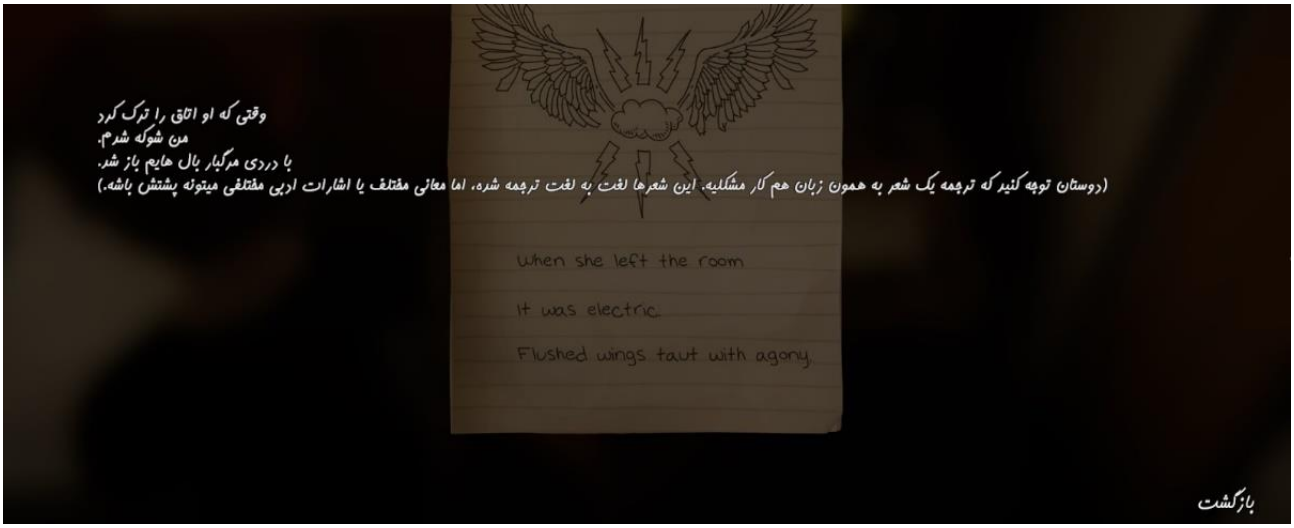

Figure 9. The Persian localized version of *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017) on the translator's reflection on his translation strategy

In Figure 9, the translator produced a literal translation of the poem. The text in the parenthesis is addressed to the players and reads, "Guys, please bear in mind that translating poems even intralingually is difficult. These poems have been translated word-for-word, so some literary allusions might have been lost in translation.". Having opted for a literal translation approach, the translator is quick to point out the possibility of meaning loss. It seems like the translator's main objective is acknowledging the difficulty of translating poetry, but in doing that he has made himself more visible.

This game situation was also characterized by extreme partial interaction in which the player is limited to pressing the 'return' button once s/he reads the poem. When considered in the broader context of the game, acknowledging the difficulty of translation can lead to more trust in the translator. This is because the players get to see both sides of the translator, one that explicates and clarifies, but also one that is honest about the difficulties of translation and the meaning loss that might occur during the translation process.

Having presented the instances of (in)visibility in the analyzed games, the frequency of each instance across all the analyzed titles is presented in Table 4:

Table 4. The frequency of translators' agency in the analyzed titles

Title	Frequency	Game situation	Type of agency
Life is Strange: Before the Storm (2017)	9	Dialogue (2) Task (4) Cut-scene (3)	Comprehension (4) Game references (3) Reflecting on translation strategies (1) Commentary (1)
Life is Strange: True Colors (2021)	1	Task (1)	Comprehension (1)
Devil May Cry 5 (2019)	3	Task (3)	Comprehension (3)
Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter (2016)	0	---	---

6. Discussion

The present study sought to shed light on translators' (in)visible agency in Persian game localization. To this end, four Persian localized video games were analyzed in terms of instances of translators' agency, (in)visibility, and the relationship between level of interactivity and translators' agency.

The findings of the study can be discussed from a number of lenses. In terms of workflow, translators have often been described to conduct a kind of "blind localization" since they usually do not have the chance to play the game they are translating (Dietz, 2006, p. 132), although some are provided with screenshots of the game alongside the de-contextualized spreadsheets with which they work (Mangiron, 2021). These are some of the major limitations of the sim-ship model, which refers to cases where the different multilingual versions of a game are released simultaneously in different locales

(O'Hagan, 2016). However, the Persian localizers of the games in the current corpus did not face such restriction because the original game was already available. As suggested by the findings, the translators had gained visibility partly because of insufficient knowledge of metaludic intratextual references between the current episode of the game and its previous installments.

The main takeaway from the findings is that creativity followed by a naturalizing translation approach can reinforce the invisibility of translators. As suggested by Jooyaeian and Khoshsaligheh (2022), video games translation in Iran is marked by a lack of creativity on the translators' part. The findings of the current research testify to the same point. This sample of translators did not exercise the *carte blanche* entrusted upon them to produce a natural translation. They also opted for an intact transfer of poems, puns, and other figures of speech into Persian. Therefore, the translators felt it necessary to compensate for the multiple layers of meaning lost during the process of translation by adding commentaries, thus making themselves more visible. Approached from a functionalist perspective, this betrays an important goal of game localization which is to provide players with an authentic experience of the game world. From a Venutian standpoint (1995), the translators of the selected corpus of games gained visibility through exercising their agency. They made the translation process and product more visible at the cost of producing a less natural translation.

Viewing the corpus of the study from a contextual perspective can also provide important insights. Of the four games, the title localized into Persian the earliest was *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017). Translated by one translator, *Life is Strange: Before the Storm* (2017) contained the highest frequency of visible agency. Moving forward, translators' visible agency was on a downward slope to the extent that no instances of visible agency were found in the Persian localized versions. However, more instances of invisible agency could be observed (e.g., in *Devil May Cry 5*, and *Life is Strange: True Colors*).

The present study contributes to the literature on agency in video games translation by accounting for interactivity, a notable feature of video games. All instances of translators' (in)visible agency occurred in situations with partial or zero interaction between the player and the game. In other words, the type of information presented in game situations characterized by zero interaction (cut-scenes) or partial interaction (game tasks) is different from those offered in other game situations (e.g., game action). As already highlighted, cut-scenes are the closest link between video games and non-interactive audiovisual products that serve as a tool for character/story development, among others (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2021). In cases where the translators gained visibility, the level of interaction was either extremely limited or zero. Little to no information was presented in fully interactive game situations where players are constantly exploring the game world.

The findings of this study have some implications for translation pedagogy. The range of areas in which game translators need to be competent seems to vary depending on the genre of the game in question. For instance, role-playing games (RPGs) usually require the translator to be competent in literary translation, among others (O'Hagan, 2019). In some cases, such as reflection on translation strategies, the translator's lack of competence in the translation of literary genre gave rise to his visibility. Most importantly, translators need to be encouraged to adopt a more creative approach to video game translation. In the sample of games analyzed in this study, translators had not made any notable use of transcreation. The creative approach to video game translation might result in less

visibility for translators, but it is likely to create a smoother and more enjoyable gaming experience for the players, which is considered the ultimate goal of video game localization.

7. Conclusion

The present study focused on shedding light on the agency of video game translators in the context of quasi-professional game localization in Iran. The findings went some way to addressing the three research questions outlined in the Methodology section. More specifically, the results revealed some of the ways in which Iranian video game translators exert their agency, as well as the connection between game situation and translators' agency. Visible agency was found to serve four broad purposes, namely explaining intratextual and intertextual game references, enhancing comprehension, providing commentary, and reflecting on translation strategies. This categorization is important because it shows the various purposes for which translators exert agency, which can in turn have some implications for translation pedagogy. We also discussed the potential of visible agency to strengthen players' trust in the translator, with some types of agencies more likely than others to achieve this. This study also uncovered several important connections between translator agency and the game situations in which it occurs, especially in relation to the level of interactivity. However, all of this should not be a cause to overlook the study's limitations. Firstly, only four games, each representing a game genre, were analyzed in this study. While the findings have provided important insights into video game translators' (in)visible agency in different game situations, they cannot be used to make generalizations about the correlation between translators' agency and interactivity. Also, all the games included in this corpus have been localized into Persian by the same translation group. This decision ensured a certain level of consistency and control across the sample, but it does mean that the observed translation strategies might be specific to the translator(s) tasked with localizing these games, and again this limits the generalizability of the findings. A possible way to overcome this limitation is to analyze video games translated into Persian by different translators.

Future research can analyze larger samples of games from a variety of genres to enhance generalizability. Also, comparisons between the visibility and agency of video game translators working in different language pairs could provide further evidence which can either support or reject the conclusions made in the present study. Another potential avenue for further research is to focus on the representations of translators' agency in video games from the same genre, having in mind the apparent connection between level of interactivity and (in)visible agency. This approach could not only lead to more robust conclusions, but it can also create opportunities for more case studies.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Live Interpreting during the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Medium, the Mode, and the Model

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Abstract

Rapid advances in communication technology, coupled with a restrictive pandemic, have led to changes to how interpreters work and deliver their services. The Pandemic has forced interpreters to work off-site: from home and online. While the mode of delivery is not entirely new, the model is. The paper examines the experience of a Sydney interpreter during the Covid-19 pandemic which witnessed a severe lockdown (June 2021) with members of the Australian army patrolling certain suburbs. In response to the unusual situation, the state government of New South Wales, Australia's largest state decided to hold a daily press conference. When it was decided to make the press conference available in certain community languages, live interpreting was the mode selected. While the medium of a virtual studio was easily set up, the experience proved to be not only new but a challenge given the complexities of the situation. The paper examines the professional activity of interpreting the state premier's daily press conference; an experience that would be called upon nine months later during the Australian Federal elections in May 2022.

Keywords

live Interpreting, simultaneous, modern standard Arabic, multicultural Australia, experience studies, press conference, political debates

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1. Introduction

Interpreting is one of the oldest human activities practiced between neighbors who do not share the same language. It is interesting that the story of the Tower of Babel is often used in reference to translators whereas it is interpreters who are meant. In pre-literate times, it was interpreters who orally carried out all 'translations' required. One of the oldest references to interpreters comes from the tomb of General Hor-em-heb in Sakkara south of Giza, in modern Egypt which dates to the 14th century BC (Rave et al., 2011). Hor-em-heb, in his northern Memphite tomb, before he became a Pharaoh, has a scene depicting him speaking to a governor from a foreign land. Between him and the governor there is an image of what appears to be two interpreters facing different directions: the pharaoh and the governor. Egyptologists tell us that this is, but one person, a single interpreter, and the double figure is an Egyptian artistic tradition expressing movement. In this instance, fast movement expresses speed (Wilkinson, 1992) and could be taken to refer to the dexterity and skills of the interpreter. This historical reference serves as a reminder of the long-held appreciation of the excellent skills interpreters have. For many years, scholars, scientists, and journalists have attempted to examine the amazing brains of conference interpreters (Watts, 2014; Grosjean, 2019), their abilities (Chernov, 2004; Ahmed, 2010) and their personalities (Torikai, 2009). Interpreters perform different tasks from translators, require different facilities and deliver different services in different modes: dialogue interpreting, consecutive interpreting, sight translation and simultaneous interpreting. There is a different setting for which each mode of interpreting is most suited (Mikkleson & Jourdenais, 2015).

2. The mode of interpreting

Interpreters work with the spoken word and therefore it is fundamental that they develop excellent listening and speaking skills, over and above their linguistic skills in the source and target languages and expert knowledge of their respective cultures. Translating skills, as understood in translation studies, refer to the knowledge of processing, negotiating and expressing meaning in the target language in a manner that is linguistically correct, culturally acceptable and pragmatically appropriate (Ellis, 1997). Interpreters recognize that different settings require different modes of interpreting. For instance, in a medical interview 'dialogue interpreting' would be appropriate whereas at a press conference 'consecutive interpreting' would be best suited to the Question & Answer setting. Conferences, meetings, and speeches, more often than not, require the simultaneous mode of interpreting. This arrangement has been defined since the end of the Second World War till about the mid-eighties when 'international events' began to be televised 'live' in more than one linguistic community which necessitated interpreting (Daly, 1985). With satellite television, better technology and globalization the need for live coverage increased. In 1991, the American invasion of Iraq gave CNN the golden opportunity to become an international household name as it was broadcasting "Live from Baghdad"; an experience that remains to be examined both in print and in film (Wiener, 1991). The CNN example is worth examining in more detail as technology made it move from a regional network "commonly dubbed Chicken Noodle Network to a global news channel" (Henry, 1992, p. 10). Not only were other American channels tuning in but also all other foreign news channels were listening and interpreting what CNN was broadcasting. Interpreting for the media thus began with the need to engage and maintain a panel of interpreters who are not only available at the proverbial "drop-of-a-hat" basis but are also reliable to work on any event covered. The only interpreters deemed

suitable for this type of work were simultaneous interpreters who can provide simultaneous interpreting as the news break and stories develop (Grosjean, 2019).

Examined experiences of interpreters working for broadcasters go back as far as the Moon Landing as described by Japanese interpreters (Torikai, 2009) and provide insights into the context of working for the broadcast media. Interpreting for the Eurovision competition in 1986 is one of the earliest detailed experiences described (Daly, 1985). More recently, interpreters focused on specific settings such as talk shows (Sergio, 1999) and covering the Oscars in Italy (Amato & Mack, 2011). Likewise in Egypt, and despite the lagging of interpreting studies, the experience of offering live interpreting during the state visit to Cairo by the president of the Soviet presidium Nikita Khrushchev in May 1964 is an invaluable case study that remains to be examined. The interpreting mode, used during this historic visit (Dawisha, 1979), was awkward moving from sight translation to consecutive interpreting while Khrushchev was delivering his speech. Simultaneous interpreting must be used when it is technically available, appropriate, and conducive to understanding. In live broadcasting, and while the mode of simultaneous interpreting appears to be the most suitable, there are several factors and issues that need to be discussed and settled before the interpreter commences interpreting.

Some of these factors and issues are the physical set up where the interpreter is placed. Clear sound is a must and so is a clear line of vision. In broadcasting, it would be a serious shortcoming if the interpreters are translating something the audience can see, and only they imagine. The other issue is preparation: conference interpreters have a modus operandi that is proposed and upheld by a robust international professional body (https://aiic.org) and there are minimum conditions covering accepting work, sound quality, preparing and even the duration in the booth. Live interpreters, and due to the nature of (broadcasting) work need to develop their own professional code of practice and to negotiate it with their employers.

3. The medium of interpreting

In conference and live interpreting the medium is essentially the same: a microphone and a headset. However, the medium, often, is governed by the setting which is subject to external pressures and changes. In conference interpreting, where simultaneous interpreters work, the equipment and the booth is provided by a technician who is usually outsourced. The setting is usually manageable but not always comfortable unless one is working for the headquarters of an organization that has dedicated conference rooms and booths for their ‘regular’ interpreted meetings. Quite often, conference interpreters must accept makeshift arrangements where booths are tucked in or even stuck somewhere in the conference room with poor or no line of vision or access to screens to follow the PowerPoint presentations. This in a way is compensated for by the time given for preparations since most conferences are planned and organized well in advance.

Live interpreters work also with the same equipment: a headset and a microphone, but the settings vary with each assignment. First and foremost, the nature of broadcasting means interpreters have to be available and ready to ‘cover’ breaking events which place a tremendous pressure on their cognitive performance. The adrenalin rush is too high and so is the stress level and the genre of the news makes no difference: bush fires, the Olympic Games, 9/11 attacks, riots at the US Congress, floods, natural

disasters, racial protests in Minneapolis, national debates, the Queen's Farewell, the Opening of the World Cup, etc. The timing of world event varies and unfortunately when one lives in a country that is GMT +10, a lot of events will happen in the middle of the night or very early in the morning. This means makeshift arrangements will be made and interpreters need to be resilient, available, and ready: mental agility, clear voice, superior linguistic command, and composure. At times, pre-recorded interpreting would be required to accompany footage used in the news bulletin or in other shows or during the live coverage at 'certain' moments. Therefore, the ability to quickly translate and to voiceover 'selected audio segments' is often a requirement made shortly before or after working on air.

Although the medium is the same, live interpreters acknowledge the main differences with conference interpreting which determine the way they work. While conference interpreters have an audience of field experts and specialists, live interpreters work for a wide audience that include all sectors of the community (Tsuruta, 2011) – which places a certain degree of pressure on the interpreter to ensure that the message gets across to all. Furthermore, whereas conference interpreters work in teams and for a short duration of 15-20 minutes maximum, depending on the complexity of the session, live interpreters do go on for a whole hour, or longer, on their own. Equally significant, is the fact that where conferences are of shorter duration 3-5 days, live coverage of significant events could go on for days and at different times of the day. Most broadcasters contact simultaneous interpreters to work as live interpreters, and in the wake of the pandemic, interpreters are increasingly engaged as 'remote' interpreters. Live interpreters continue to face challenges that are peculiar to broadcasting contexts such as mixed-mode interpreting where the speaker is delivering a speech (interpreted simultaneously) then takes questions from the press (requiring consecutive interpreting) and when a sheet of information is given out (sight translation is required). The ever-changing context of live interpreting, and despite the same medium of interpreting shared with conference interpreting, places more pressures on the live interpreter.

4. The model of interpreting

In live interpreting, the objective is different from that in conference interpreting even though the mode and the medium tend to be the same. This is because what is being translated is a lot more than words: whether in the form of a speech or a text being read out. While the interpreter is a simultaneous interpreter their task is to address a public in need of translation of what is being said in addition to information, background knowledge of the broadcast event as well as interpretation of the visual before them. Naturally this largely depends on the event being broadcast, the significance of the event and the genre of the linguistic message being interpreted. As live interpreters deal with a variety of settings it would be restrictive to insist that the interpreter translates only the words being said or heard. With the existence of the visual before the audience, the interpreter would be out of place should they only interpret words heard. Their task, depending on the event, is akin to a TV commentator and not just an interpreter. This expanded role (and responsibility) is gained with experience, not just as an interpreter, but also as an interpreter in a 'specific and continuing event', for example in interpreting during an extended coverage of bush fires, the on-going coverage of a sports competition, federal elections or a regular press conference that goes on for several weeks or months such as covering the War in Ukraine.

Like conference interpreters, live interpreters are not seen and do not appear on the TV screen but unlike the former, their voice becomes so familiar to the audience and this familiarity with the voice establishes a kind of consistency and with it a type of familiarity that leads to a degree of credibility particularly in times of stress, pandemic, war, or national disaster. As events tend to go for longer time than conferences the task, skills and role of live interpreters deserve more attention and examination. Several scholars examined simultaneous interpreters' work (Downie, 2016) and skills (Jones, 2002) and focused on how interpreters develop their strategies (Torikai, 2009), decision-making process (Seleskovitch, 1978), compensation (Sleskovitch & Lederer, 1993) and risk management (Akbari, 2009). The latter is of great interest to interpreters as they face challenges in the course of their work that vary from poor sound to the loss of sound, multi-speakers at the same time and various speakers at the same session. Live coverage is a multifaceted and complex task, and though it appears like simultaneous interpreting, it is more complex for an interpreter who is trying to make sense of the entire event by focusing on the audio and the visual as well. In a sense it is akin to the subtitler who translates the audio while interpreting the visual.

It is because of the complexity in interpreting during live coverage that interpreters seek latitude to allow them to combine the audio and the visual in their model of interpreting. This latitude is always governed and guided by the network's guidelines and the experience of the managing directors. To appreciate the need for further research into this area, I will now turn my attention to two examples of live interpreting that took place in Sydney. The first is during the lockdown, necessitated by the severe spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which took place in the form of a daily press conference. The second is during the Australian federal elections of May 2022. It took the form of a series of five national debates between the primary candidates and between senior ministers. After describing the setting of each example, I will discuss the experience highlighting the need for further research into this model of interpreting which is gaining more popularity in the broadcasting industry as the global village is getting smaller and smaller thanks to rapid advances in telecommunication technology and the tendency to favor remote interpreting over on-site interpreting as well as the impact this is having on the interpreting profession.

4.1. Example one: Interpreting the daily Covid Press Conference

In early 2021, Australia was gripped by fear, disinformation, and conflicting government directives on how best to deal with the pandemic. Masks worn in public, social distancing (later revised to) physical distancing, and hand sanitizing were among the obvious instructions, but the situation was a lot more confused and confusing when it came to working, taking public transport and travelling. All air travel came to a halt. Moving from one region to another, either for work or to visit family was gradually being restricted. A lockdown loomed large and indeed by June 2021, Sydney, Australia's largest city was in lockdown.

The state government of New South Wales, Australia's largest state, decided to embark on a public campaign to communicate with the public through a daily press conference. In the conference, the Premier would appear accompanied by some senior members of her government who are involved in the state's response to the Pandemic. The conference followed a pattern where the Premier would start the conference and report on the situation as regards the spread of the pandemic and the latest measures

taken. This would be followed by her Chief Medical Officer responsible for the plan to counter the pandemic. Following these two persons other government personnel such as the police minister representing law and order would speak on how the government intends to enforce the government's plan and directives. After all government officials had spoken, the press would have about ten to fifteen minutes to ask questions. The press conference took place in the foyer of the government building where the Premier has her office. This contrasts with a similar press conference held in the State of Victoria, where the Premier held his conference in a public park next to his building. Though the background was green and lush, the street noise, and unfriendly birds, made the task of the live interpreter unnecessarily more difficult. In July 2021, the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia's largest multicultural broadcaster (radio and television) decided not only to broadcast the Daily Press Conference but also to offer live interpreting for the whole duration in a small number of highly relevant community languages. It was decided to offer the live interpreting in Arabic, Assyrian, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese (Kwan, 2022).

SBS Radio and Television, established in 1978, has played a significant part in the Australian community both for new migrants and for the predominantly European community since its inception: broadcasting programs from 'home' for the newly arrived migrants and offering a taste of the several cultural backgrounds that are increasingly making up the Australian multicultural community. Like any large city, Sydney is a vast metropolis with regions known for certain demographics. During the lockdown, the regions of high incidents of reported infections with Covid were identified with high demographic density and concentration of Arabic, Assyrian, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese communities. Furthermore, they also have a younger demographic profile which meant the workforce of construction workers, laborers, technicians, and those working in the service industry reside in those socio-economic regions. Movement by these workers was seen as a risk the state government needed to be able to manage. SBS Radio contacted interpreters and explained the project and requested that interpreters be available and ready to 'go live' within 48 hours. On the 23rd of July 2021, at 11 o'clock in the morning, SBS Radio launched one of its remarkable services to multicultural Australia the extent of which has not been seen or attempted previously. Arabic was the first language to go live, on the first day of launching the live interpreted coverage followed by the other three languages a day or two apart. During the lockdown, SBS Radio delivered a special microphone and a headset to the interpreter's residence by a special courier wearing protective clothing. Access to the medium was given to the interpreter via a web site that allowed the input/output to be tested and controlled remotely. All interpreters are qualified and experienced 'simultaneous interpreters' and despite their experience they were not comfortable with the short notice. Prior to July 2021, everyone was already working from home, has already discovered, and used various platforms for virtual meetings whether Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Adobe Connect, Google Meet etc., has interpreted over the phone for at least eighteen months and carried out numerous hours of virtual court hearings via video-conferencing. The Covid-19 pandemic had changed the way most interpreters work in Australia and had made remote interpreting the more popular, if not favored modus operandi of interpreting for a variety of reasons, but the Coronavirus was not the sole reason for the shift.

For all intents and purposes, the daily press conference by the NSW Premier was an exercise in public relations with clear objectives: a face-to-face meeting with the community, daily, for just an hour, to brief the community on the latest developments in a fast-changing situation and with an opportunity,

for the press, to ask a few questions. SBS Radio realized that this arrangement needed to be conveyed in some of the community languages most affected. The one-hour daily press conference, having gone for almost ten weeks tended to develop a clear pattern. Notwithstanding some changes that largely depended on the developing situation, the pattern can be analyzed in Table 1.

Table 1. The main components of the one-hour daily press conference

Part	Duration	Speaker	Topic	Notes: Language & Information
1	15 mins	The Premier	Reporting	Directives. Concepts. Numbers. Terms.
2	10 mins	Health Advisor	Medical Info	Technical: Terms, Names, Numbers
3	10 mins	Police Chief	Legal matters	Concept, terms
4	10 mins	Prof. Expert	Prof. issues	Changeable. New info. Names & Terms
5	15 mins	The Press	Q & A	Off camera. Over talk. Poor sound. Noise

Within a few days of the press conference the above pattern became clear which gave the interpreter an idea of what to expect. This is vitally important for live interpreters as it aids them to scaffold their output and to take better control of risk management (Seleskovitch, 1978).

Interpreting and particularly in the simultaneous mode, is not and should not be about guessing what the speaker is about to say but rather translate what they say. In the absence of briefing, the nemesis of all bad interpreting, any background information on facts, details, issues, terms, name and numbers is always welcome and greatly appreciated as it frees the interpreter from overloading their short-term memory and enables them to focus on clarity, meaning and style. While the above table sums up the five major parts of the daily press conference rather neatly, it must be remembered that within each part there are sub issues and dilemmas that cropped up during the press conference: some are thematic; others are technical while others are professional. Interpreted press conferences take place every day and in a very broad spectrum of fields from foreign affairs to film festivals and in football, the post-match press conference is a fine example of the mechanics and pressures of live interpreting. Although some scholars have examined the intricate nature of interpreting at press conferences, the field is too large to be covered in one case study (Gamal, 2014). In Arabic interpreting studies, press conferences remain under-represented despite the abundance of professional examples and case studies that could enhance our understanding of the practice of interpreting at this complex, multifaceted and challenging setting.

I now turn to another professional example of live interpreting taken from the Australian political system and carried out for the Special Broadcasting Service. This time it was covered live on national television during the May 2022 Federal elections. A discussion of both examples will follow.

4.2. Example two: Interpreting National Debates

In April 2022, the government announced the date for the federal elections to be held on Saturday 21 May 2022. There is a legal obligation of the government in office to announce the date which is usually 33 days prior to the polling day (Marsh, 2022). The political hype prior to the elections begins with advertising in the print, audiovisual and online media outlets and culminates in a televised debate between the leaders of the two political parties in the country.

SBS Television, in Sydney, decided to offer live interpreting for the national debate. This time, the multicultural broadcaster gave the interpreter a three-day notice but with one major change from the Covid daily press conference broadcast nine months earlier. This was a briefing by the management as to the Broadcaster's guidelines on interpreting a national debate. National debates are not a common scene in the Australian political landscape despite increasing interest in following the American presidential tradition. In fact, it was only the second ever political debate and was the first to be interpreted live. The fact that SBS Radio and Television embarked on offering live interpreting, during unusual and stressful times in the country, is largely seen as a service of accessibility at a level not seen or attempted previously. For almost half a century, Australia's multicultural broadcasting service (www.sbs.com) has been making languages and cultures available to a wide sector of the community, roughly estimated to be a quarter of the population who were born overseas. This quarter of the population is larger than just 25% by virtue of mixed marriages, second generation and other Australians, from native, European, or other migrant backgrounds. Here a distinction is made between broadcasting the national debate on its channels (radio, television and online) therefore making it 'available' and going an extra step of interpreting it into several languages (Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese) thus making it 'accessible'.

In the last federal election, and indeed in all past elections, there was only one debate where the two leaders would face a moderator, usually an experienced and well-known announcer to answer a series of questions prepared by the broadcaster. Each candidate is given a short period of time usually 2-3 minutes to answer. In theory, it is not unlike an interview with two persons who are listening attentively to the interviewer and answering relevantly, objectively, and politely. In reality though, the occasion has been turned into a television drama high on style and low on substance. In this regard, the Australian political debate reflects the American presidential debate as seen, live on television, during America's last election between Biden and Trump (Nobel, 2022).

This background was shared and discussed in the briefing and with it the expected role of the interpreter. While the role of the interpreter, in any setting or context, is to translate the message accurately and correctly as is practically possible, the genre of interpreting televised political debates has an extra dimension that the broadcaster believed was significant to share with all interpreters. This was latitude and *editorializing* the message. It is not additions or omissions that worried the broadcaster but coloring the words! For the voice of the interpreter must remain neutral to the message translated even the 'tone of voice'. As it happened, two interpreters were engaged for each language with the decision to have mixed gender in each team. The mixed gender was a professional decision in order to enhance the reception of the service. To maintain impartiality, interpreters took turns when working on the national debates: and there were five of them prior to the Election Day. The political debate,

between the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader, was a series of three rounds, moderated by three different well-known and therefore familiar announcers in addition to two other 'ministerial debates' focusing on the economy and defense. The elections came in the wake of two difficult years where the pandemic had wreaked havoc with almost everything from nursing homes to schools and from shopping to working, rising tension in the Pacific and a series of natural disasters that befell Australia from bushfires to floods which brought, naturally, the government's policies into question. In other words, the interpreter selected for this professional assignment would have to be familiar with the political system, the economic situation, and the government responses to major challenges from natural disasters to the pandemic to diplomatic relations in the Pacific.

This last topic, the military and defense issues was, as can be expected, a complex context for any interpreter let alone during a national political debate on the eve of federal elections. Political debates are not a new genre or setting for interpreters and it has indeed been examined and reflected upon by the media and academia alike (Wang 2012, Elias 2022). The practice of interpreting political speeches is observed in countries with strong media sectors like Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, France, Canada, and the United States. This experience is significant for it sheds light on a genre of interpreting that is vastly different from that encountered in simultaneous (mainly conference) interpreting due to the setting, which is characterized by tension, interruptions, unfinished sentences, rhetoric, clichés, digression, loss of sound, poor acoustics and a discourse that is sometimes difficult to anticipate. For the three leaders' debates, in May 2022, the pattern followed a Q & A style with 2-3 minutes to answer the question posed by the moderator and a chance to sum up their position at the end in a few minutes. While each leader did their best to be cooperative it was a challenge for the interpreter. The seemingly simple arrangement of a single question and "short answer" turned out to be far from simple. For all intents and purposes, the five debates had the following pattern, with minor changes caused primarily by one of the debaters violating the agreement on turn taking, duration and cooperation.

Table 2. The pattern of the five election debates between the leaders and top ministers

No	The Debate	Duration	Issues & Characteristics
1st	Leaders	One hour	Both leaders show respect, the PM shows more flair facing the camera, more fluent with political and economic rhetoric.
2nd	Leaders	One hour	As both leaders become more confident, they trade accusations with lots of facts and figures, speak fast with lots of clichés.
3rd	Leaders	One hour	Both are aggressive, speak fast, interrupt each other. The debate almost derailed as it descended to a slinging match.
1st	Ministerial	One hour	The defense ministers are camera shy. Stuck to their guns, low on content high on numbers, repetitions and interruptions.
1st	Ministerial	One hour	The treasurers are averse to the media. Lots of figures and numbers. High on statistics and low on impact.

The moderator introduced his or her question with a short reference to an incident then asked the question. Though composed and unemotional, the question was long and came after an introduction which could easily be challenging to the interpreter. The answer, however, proved to be problematic. Though each leader was told to answer in 2-3 minutes, they tried to cram as much information as they could in the short time requested of them. The language was sarcastic at times, peppered with figures and statistics at fast speed. Neither leader did adhere to the 2-3-minute rule and worst of all they interrupted each other and threw comments in medias res. As former economists, both leaders are fluent not only in statistics but also in terminology and not used to being told to be brief! They tried to win each round of the national televised debate and with time both became more aggressive towards each other, but predominantly polite. It is interesting to observe that while both leaders are charismatic one was more linguistically fluent, a natural speaker. Over-talking was a technique they used perhaps to add spice to their show like Muhammad Ali used to throw verbal punches at his boxing opponents in the pre-fight press conference (Murphy, 2022). The two ministerial debates, on the other hand, were between ministers who clearly were not used to facing the media. The defense minister and the treasurer are two very significant posts in the Australian government however neither minister was adept at speaking in public. No matter what expertise a minister has, being camera shy is a serious handicap at a press conference and strategies must be developed to compensate for this shortcoming. Thus, raising the voice, repeating certain words, interruptions, use of euphemisms or uncommon idiomatic expressions are among the strategies employed. Unlike the treasurers' debate where each minister tried to drown the other in numbers and financial terminology; the more camera shy defense ministers resorted to long-winded sentences, repetitions, body language, sarcasm and *alta voce.*

5. Discussion

Although the concept of live interpreting is not new, the term has several variations such as remote, distant, virtual, phone, video and online interpreting. The multiplicity of terms though sharing the same medium (of headphone and a microphone) refer to a variety of interpreting modes (dialogue, sight translation, consecutive, voice over, summary). However, the term live interpreting is widely used within the broadcasting context which reflects the major activity of "live coverage". Australian media outlets, during both the Covid-19 daily press conference and the Federal Elections used the terms "Live interpreting" and "live interpreters" on several occasions (Elias, 2022; Kwan, 2022).

Live interpreting in the contexts described above clearly differs from other models of interpreting and particularly simultaneous interpreting commonly used in conferences and meetings. In this model of closed quarters, the interpreter is spared the media/social pressure of interpreting during an emergency, national crisis, or an international event. While conference interpreters do face animated sessions and meetings, these only go for a few minutes and are far in between given the more professional and academic-like nature of the meetings. In simultaneous interpreting the audience are largely experts in the field and the terminology is already defined, shared, and understood. Furthermore, most conferences and their literature are agreed upon in advance. This is rarely the case in "live" interpreting. There is, therefore, a need to pay closer attention to this model of interpreting as the above Australian examples have shown. A definition of live interpreting is perhaps the first point of departure. Live interpreting is the model of interpreting within the broadcasting industry that is usually in response to an emerging event the end of which is unpredictable. The unpredictability here refers to

how the developing story will unfold which makes it difficult for the interpreter to research. The media outlet may suddenly decide to include live interpreting for as long as it deems necessary. The interpreter in this model of live interpreting needs to be available and ready. This requires a higher degree of flexibility and the expertise to conduct research and preparation in a short period of time, usually 48 hours or less.

The experience of live interpreting in the daily updates through a press conference was discussed with the SBS management through a debriefing phone call after each press conference. This professional arrangement was both insightful and fruitful as the experience gained would be utilized a few months later. Although no fresh material such as latest figures, names, police orders or medical advice was passed from the Broadcaster to the interpreter, the broadcaster's professional care proved helpful for the interpreter and boosted their resilience. The one-hour press conference, and not withstanding its five parts, was a grueling exercise by professional standards. Each part presented its own challenges as the press conference itself went through times of stress: the official medical advice was questioned, the government decision to call a lockdown came under fire for being too late, the decision to call the army to patrol streets in suburbs with migrants from Iraq and Vietnam was too delicate and finally as the Premier herself came under fire from a particular member of the press who was directing questions in regards to an investigation into her political/personal affairs.

In an ideal world, a live interpreter would appreciate knowing what the live coverage is about and with adequate time to prepare. Working for the broadcasting media is a rewarding experience, both financially and professionally, however, it would be ideal if the speakers (the government) appreciate that the press conference is being interpreted. It was delightful to hear the Premier acknowledging the fact that the press conference is being interpreted but that did not convince the participants to speak either clearly or at normal speed. Some started speaking with their masks on, while others turned their face away from the microphone, spoke off camera and on several occasions, they spoke on top of another speaker. The worst culprits were members of the press. As soon as the premier invited questions from the press (the last part of the press conference) they behaved like children: screaming, speaking at the same time, off camera and off the microphone. It was painful to interpret an answer to a question that was not captured. In the few occasions when a question was heard clearly, it was far from being lucid: long-winded with multiple concepts and spoken fast because there was always another question. Despite requests (and later complaints) to the broadcasting management, nothing could have been done to tame the press.

The repeated experience over ten weeks created a kind of familiarity for all parties involved: the premier, her team members, the press, the interpreter as well as the Arabic-speaking audience who were following the interpreted press conference on television, the radio and on Facebook. This familiarity worked for all parties particularly the interpreters. Learning and gaining momentum as the media story unfolds is the hallmark of resilience and experience. However, the business decision to change interpreters, in mid-stream, resulted in a marked shift in the fluency of the narrative, the consistency of the terminology and phraseology, and ultimately the credibility of the press conference. It must be remembered that the goal of the press conference was first to convince Sydneysiders, particularly the residents of certain LGAs (local government areas) where the infection numbers were high, to accept and adhere to the lockdown. Second, the press conference aimed to convince all

residents to take the vaccine (regardless of its brand name). As the Premier said "once the vaccination reaches 80% it would be possible to ease the lockdown" so it was a race for the credibility of the press conference (Crowe & Curtis, 2022).

In the five segments of the national debates at the leader and ministerial levels it was almost the same pattern of live interpreting but with one major difference: speaking at the speed of light. The debate is structured around the format of a moderator introducing a concept then asking a question. At times the same question was put to both debaters and at other times the moderator would ask each debater a specific question. All debaters were requested to adhere to the rule of 2-3 minutes to answer, a simple rule to follow at this professional level; however, that was rarely the case as other factors weighed in. Debaters spoke faster to include more in their allowed time. Unfortunately, for the interpreter, this speed is a lot faster than the normal and comfortable speed of 120 words per minute. As the questions got more complex, tougher, or unexpected the debaters resorted to techniques that varied from shouting, over speaking and interrupting to laughing or simple noise making and hostile body language.

In the political debates, two interpreters were working together in what would normally be a pleasant, albeit intense, setting due mainly to the context. It was difficult, at times, to make sense of the message in the source language and consequently the target language reflected the noise. The televised national debates required the interpreter to work onsite at the television station which though capable was not necessarily accommodating of the interpreter's professional requirements. Live interpreting, as experience shows, is a lot more than just good equipment. Professional interpreters though resilient also need the support of the broadcasting service to perform better as live interpreters in the context described above. This means the appreciation that interpreters need notice to prepare and get to know the event program to mentally summon up the required sociolinguistic frames of reference. The incident of Al-Arabiya Network interpreter erroneously translating King Charles III announcement as "It gives me pleasure to announce the death of my beloved mother Queen Elizabeth II" made the headlines (https://multilingual.com/al-arabiya-interpreting-mistake). This is a huge mistake at this high level of live interpreting and in these tense circumstances. Professional interpreters can sympathize with the interpreter as they know what could have happened. In this incident, the interpreter was called upon to be available and ready for an evolving news story, with little or no time to mentally prepare. The king's speech is not difficult, and King Charles is known for his clear enunciation and good speaking speed, however, the interpreter was overwhelmed by the occasion and failed to summon up the appropriate sociolinguistic frames of reference for the occasion. Speaking in Modern Standard Arabic; a register that is higher than the usual vernacular, and at this formal occasion, the interpreter needed that little precious time to prepare mentally.

6. Concluding remarks

As the world continues to get smaller and smaller due to rapid advancements in telecommunication technology, the media's insatiable thirst for live coverage will increase and with it the need for live interpreters. In this paper, the focus has been on the work of interpreters in the broadcasting industry and an attempt has been made to describe the context in which they work. It is insightful to examine the history of live interpreting and its close association with the broadcasting environment. The

numerous terms that can and do describe this type of work need not underestimate the need to establish a definition for a single term for the live interpreter. The field of live interpreting, in the wake of almost three years of working from home and online, is likely to favor a remote basis of work which is fortunately supported by capable and improving technology.

There are several issues which were not examined in this paper such as the task of the interpreter in live coverage since the context particularly when compared to the context of the simultaneous interpreter is vastly different. Also, the significant issue of what information needs to be made available to the interpreter working in the context of a live coverage. Equally significant is the complex issue of audience who are heterogeneous in contrast to the homogenous audience in conferences where everyone (even the press covering the conference) are specialists in the field or very familiar with the topic. This is an area that needs further examination as it affects the performance of the broadcasting interpreter. As live interpreters work on multi-platforms (on air and online), and their work is accessed by the public, it gets reviewed and evaluated by the audience and, instantaneously. In this respect, live interpreters share the challenge subtitlers face: being quickly (and often unfairly) criticized by viewers who have very little understanding of the challenges resulting from the medium, the mode and the model of linguistic transfer.

The main issues of live interpreting, as a distinct form of interpretation, is the recognition that live interpreting requires a special training, a manual of good practice and a robust research agenda. There are also other pertinent professional issues that need to be negotiated with the media sector itself that cover technology, ergonomics, rules of engagement, remuneration, briefing and debriefing fatigue as well as professional development. Given that live interpreting is used almost exclusively within the broadcasting context, it would be insightful and indeed a sound investment to see the broadcasting industry develop a training package for live interpreters to work in some of the major professional contexts. As stories tend to break and develop instantly, hoping for an interpreter who is available and ready, at the drop of a hat, is not always a good strategy.

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Transfer of Ideological Stances through Stylistic Choices in Translation: The Case of the Persian Subtitle of *The Matrix*

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Abstract

Although a great deal has been written on the technical and linguistic aspects of subtitling, less attention has been paid to the stylistic analysis of subtitles. Nevertheless, stylistic choices of the subtitler could reveal the ideologies of the translator and filmmakers. Subtitling in Iran is mainly performed by fans, and their subtitles are widely used on various unauthorized websites. Since they translate out of passion and remain unpaid for what they do, unlike in official dubbing, there is little ideological and institutional pressures on the translator's choices. In the present study, the Persian subtitle of the film (*The Matrix*, 1999) was selected as the case study. The study aimed to investigate how the subtitler presents his unique style of subtitling and, by so doing, reveals the ideology of the film as well. The results showed the use of various stylistic strategies, namely the explication of dialogues, the expansion of acronyms, the addition of information, and the explanation of allusions.

Keywords

audiovisual translation, ideology, style, subtitling, *The Matrix*

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1. Introduction

The unauthorized dubbed and subtitled foreign films/series are unofficially distributed on online platforms in Iran against the limiting regulations of official dubbing and distribution of such foreign audiovisual content (Danaeefar et al., 2020). Therefore, contrary to the official professional dubbed versions in Persian, audiovisual products without the pressures of regulatory officials are subtitled by fans within the shortest timespan between the original release and its distribution on the Internet. Non-professional subtitling or fansubbing in Iran is practiced widely. These subtitles are easily accessible to the Iranian audience, primarily free of charge or at a low cost (Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2019). With this background in mind, "subtitle" and "subtitler" in the present study will henceforth be used to refer to the "non-professional subtitle" and "fansubber", respectively, unless specified otherwise. The current study suggests a new line of research in the analysis of audiovisual materials, focusing on the transfer of the source text's (the original film) ideological stance through the stylistic choices of the subtitler. Carter and Nash, as cited in Munday (2013), stressed that studying ideology and its representation requires close attention to language and style. This issue has remained under-researched in Translation Studies (TS). In an attempt to address this gap, the current study aims to: 1) categorize the stylistic features of this particular subtitle, and 2) reveal the film's ideological stances in the subtitle through the analysis of the subtitler's stylistic choices.

We are particularly interested in closely examining the linguistic choices of the subtitler in an effort to identify recurrent stylistic patterns. The subtitle of *The Matrix* (1999) is studied to understand the ways in which the subtitler's stylistic choices disclosed the film's ideology. Accordingly, the study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the stylistic patterns of the subtitle?
2. What do the stylistic patterns of the subtitle reveal about the ideologies of the original film?

2. Literature review

2.1. Ideology and style in translation

It is challenging to define ideology, mainly because it has been defined by multiple scholars and interpreted differently in various fields. In its Marxist sense, ideology is the product of its monetary system and the resulting class relations and class interests (Abrams & Harpham, 2014). Van Dijk (1998) defines his notion of ideology as beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for a community to act accordingly. Similarly, Simpson (2003) defines "ideology" as assumptions, beliefs, and sets of values shared by social groups. When a social group is in a position of power, its ideology gains dominance. Munday (2007) believes that Simpson and Van Dijk broadened the notion of ideology away from a purely political sense to encompass cultural aspects (e.g., knowledge, beliefs, and value systems of the individual and society). Nowadays, "ideology" is used in various non-Marxist ways, ranging from a label for dogmatic political ideas to a neutral term for ways of thinking that are thought to correlate with an individual's race, sex, nationality, education, or ethnic group" (Abrams & Harpham, 2014, p. 204).

The relationship between ideology and translation was first acknowledged by scholars who had cultural-oriented approaches in TS; however, little consensus exists on the definition of the concept in TS (Mollanazar & Fuladi, 2021). Hatim and Mason (1997) introduced two closely related concepts of "ideology of translating" and "translation of ideology", meaning "translation is an ideological activity" and "translators filter the text world of the source through their own ideology, with differing results", respectively. Similarly, Munday (2009) argued that ideologies could be reflected through lexical, syntactic, and discursive choices made by translators. In a study on the notion of ideology in TS regarding the two mentioned interrelated concepts, Fang (2011) considers the micro-level linguistic analysis of ideologies as a helpful tool for the study of 'translation of ideology'.

Calzada-Pérez (2014) claims that ideology promotes or legitimates the interests of a particular social group. In the same vein, the entertainment industry contains, reflects, and promulgates ideology (Grant, 2007). Films could either endorse or challenge the dominant cultural, political, social, religious, personal, and philosophical ideologies.

Of the various definitions of ideology, Abrams & Harpham's definition is adopted in the present study as it is more comprehensive and includes both political ideas and neutral ways of thinking that are specific to an individual's race, sex, nationality, education, or ethnic group. Ideology in the present research is to be understood as a system of beliefs that show the directors' worldview and its manifestation in the film.

Like ideology, there are conflicting definitions of style. Style is defined as "the linguistic characteristics of a particular text" (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 11). In other words, style is the manner of expression and consists of choices made from the linguistic repertoire. In examining the style of a text, one is not interested in choices in isolation but rather in a pattern of options (frequency of choices) in the whole text. In such cases, identifying style means awareness of deviation from the norm (the norm of a particular writer, genre, period), approaching another contrasting norm (Leech & Short, 2007). Munday (2013) defines "Style" as the linguistic fingerprint of the translator, those linguistic choices that make his translations distinguishable from the work of others. Building on Leech & Short's (2007) definition of style, which considers style as deviations from the norm and emphasizes trends and recurrent patterns and how these represent the individual translator's translational style; therefore, the definition of "Style" in the present research refers to the subtitler's distinctive way of translating, which generally deviates from the established subtitling norms. Consequently, the subtitler's choices and the frequency of those choices comprises his style of subtitling in this film.

2.2. Ideology in audiovisual translation

Various studies have been carried out on ideologically motivated manipulation and censorship of audiovisual translation (AVT) in general (Cintas, 2012); on dubbing (Agost, 2004; Bucaria, 2009, 2018; Ranzato, 2012; Sandrelli, 2016; Yahiaoui, 2016) and subtitling, in particular, on fansubbing as activism worldwide (Guo & Evans, 2020; Jiang, 2022).

In addition, numerous studies were conducted locally regarding the ideology-related issues in AVT, particularly in dubbing, such as analysis of ideological manipulations in dubbing (Kenevisi et al., 2016; Khoshsaligheh & Ameri, 2016; Pakar & Khoshsaligheh, 2022); and censorship in dubbing (Pakar et

al., 2020; Pakar & Khoshsaligheh, 2021), taboo rendition in dubbing (Rezvani Sichani & Afrouz, 2019). Moreover, some relevant local studies to a lesser extent, were conducted on subtitling, such as examining the ideological manipulation of ideologically loaded terms of political speech in the English subtitle (Moradi Joz et al., 2014) and studies regarding the rendition of swear words in subtitling (Fakharzadeh & Dadkhah, 2020; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2018).

However, to the best of our knowledge, no local studies have been conducted examining how film ideologies could be revealed through the stylistic choices of the subtitler. The present study was carried out to address this gap.

2.3. Style in audiovisual translation

Bordwell (1997) defines cinematic style as the result of choices made by the filmmaker(s) in particular circumstances. He also uses "style" to refer to an individual director or group (Hollywood). However, this study does not intend to focus on style from a Film Studies perspective, which mainly deals with aesthetics. This section focuses on studies regarding style in AVT, particularly film subtitling.

There are subtitling guidelines, which are almost universal; grammar and lexical items tend to be simplified and the number of characters per line is limited (Fodor, 1975; Cintas & Remael, 2014). In this regard and in a primitive sense, "personal style" in subtitling may be considered deviations from the norm and guidelines, for instance, the manner of segmentation of subtitles, the use of one- or two-liners, and the use of colors and so on. Munday (2013), in a book chapter named "Style in Audiovisual Translation" brings the analysis of "Style" in subtitling to the fore and as an object of investigation alongside analysis of style of a novella, film script, and film. Consequently, the authors of the current paper were inspired by the mentioned chapter to conduct this research to determine the stylistic strategies adopted by the subtitler in the translation of The Matrix film and to investigate how these stylistic strategies helped retain the ideologies of the film. However, as was previously mentioned, to the best of our knowledge, research on the linguistic style of subtitlers in AVT is scarce, except for studies that have discussed the creative turn in subtitling (McClarty, 2012, 2014; Romero Fresco & Chaume, 2022).

3. Method

This film depicts a dystopian future where humanity is unknowingly trapped inside a simulated reality, The Matrix, in which intelligent machines have been created to distract humans while using their bodies as a source of energy. Neo (Keanu Reeves) believes that Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) can answer his question -- What is the Matrix? Neo is contacted by Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), who leads him into an underworld where he meets Morpheus. They fight for their lives against viciously intelligent secret agents. It is a truth that could cost Neo something more precious than his life (The Matrix, 2022)[1]. This film was written and directed by the Wachowskis. "*The Matrix* is a philosopher's Rorschach inkblot test where philosophers see their favored philosophies (e.g., existentialism, Marxism, feminism, Buddhism, nihilism, and postmodernism). Name your philosophical ism, and you

[1] *The Matrix*. Rotten Tomatoes. (2022). Retrieved on 27 March 2022, from https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/matrix.

can find it in *The Matrix*" (Worth, 2002, p. 1). The directors acknowledge that they have woven many philosophical themes and allusions into the film's fabric[2].

This descriptive study with an exploratory approach attempted to answer the research questions by comparing the source and the target subtitles. To demonstrate how the subtitler manifests his translatorial style through subtitling, disobeys the norms, and reveals the source product's ideology, *The Matrix* film was selected. The reason for selecting this film was that it has roots in some religious and philosophical ideologies, hence the transfer of ideological stances through the subtitler's stylistic choices could be better investigated. The original film was downloaded from www.avamovies.ir. Moreover, its English and Persian subtitles were retrieved from www. Subkade.ir. A fansubber provided the Persian subtitle under the name of Yasin Boroon. Further research revealed that the fansubber has a weblog[3] where he shares his subtitles on the Internet. He translated films such as *The Matrix* franchise, The Lord of the Rings trilogy, and The Hobbit trilogy. The reason for selecting this subtitle was that the subtitler was aware of the ideologies of the film and attempted to reflect them in his translation. The researchers compared all captions of the Persian translated subtitle (*n*=1,372 captions) with its original counterparts to find the recurrent patterns.

4. Results

After analyzing the collected data, the researchers found four distinct stylistic strategies in the studied subtitle and categorized them as can be seen in Table 1. The subtitler's translatorial style is evident through the patterned use of explication of dialogues, expansion of acronyms, the addition of information, and explanation of allusions (Table 1).

Table 1. Stylistic strategies of the subtitler

Translational style	Definition	Frequency	
Explication of dialogues	The translation interprets the meaning of the dialogue and clarifies obscurities of the source text	28	
Expansion of acronyms	Explanation of the full meanings of the abbreviated forms	5	
Addition of information	Characters' names	5	16
	Graphics	3	
	Explanation of words	8	

[2] https://www.matrixfans.net/movies/the-matrix/wachowski-brothers-chat-transcript/
[3] http://yboroon.blogfa.com

Explanation of allusions	Explanation of implicit or indirect references	8

In the subsequent sections, each stylistic strategy is analyzed in detail. It is shown how, through some of these characteristics, the film's ideologies were revealed or elaborated for the Persian audience.

4.1. Explication of dialogues

Of the 1,372 analyzed captions, 28 dialogues were found to have been elucidated by the subtitler. Therefore, despite a prevalent tendency to condense information in subtitles due to time and space constraints, this subtitler explicated the dialogues further by elaboration. As displayed in Table 2, this subtitler clarifies the dialogues for the audience. The bold lines are added by the subtitler. The subtitler was inconsistent whenever he explained the dialogues as he used *, [], " ", and the color orange to separate the actual dialogue from the interpretations of the dialogues he provided.

Table 2. Explication of dialogues

Original Dialogue	Time	Subtitle	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle
Lieutenant, you were given specific orders.	00:02:23	ستوان، به شما دستورات مشخصی داده شده بود **[که وارد عمل نشید]***	Lieutenant, you were given specific orders. **[to not operate]**
I know. They cut the hard line.	00:03:28	میدونم ، اونا خط ارتباطی* رو بریده بودن **»یعنی به خط نفوذ کردن و تونستن ردیابیش کنن«**	I know. They cut the communication line. **[meaning that they penetrated the line and were able to track it]**
The mind has trouble letting go.	00:44:56	چون ذهن با رَها شدن مشکل داره* **»یعنی بعد از بالا رفتن سن، ذهن که با گذشته عجین شده دیگه نمیتونه اون رو رَها و حقیقت رو قبول کنه«**	The mind has trouble letting go. **"That is, after getting older, the mind is tied to the past and can no longer let go of it and accept the truth"**
... and they are no one.	00:57:56	و در عین حال هیچکس نیستند	and they are no one.

		«یعنی هویتشون مشخص نیست و هر لحظه بخوان میتونن با تسخیر بدن یه شخص دیگه هرجایی ظاهر بشن»	**“It means that their identities are not known and they can appear anywhere by taking over the body of another person at any moment.”**
- Do you always look at it encoded? - Well, you have to.	01:01:38	همیشه شکل کدگذاری* شده ـش رو نگاه می‌کنید؟ خب مجبوریم **«یعنی چرا از اون برنامه که کد ماتریکس رو میشکنه و اون رو به صورت تصویر در میاره مثل برنامه شبیه‌ساز مبارزه استفاده نمی‌کنید»**	- Do you always look at it encoded? - Well, you have to. **“it means, why don't you use that program that breaks the matrix code and turns it into an image, like a combat simulator program”**
.. what you needed to hear.	01:52:02	که دقیقا نیاز داشتی بشنوی* **«منظور اینه که تو در عمل قبول نداشتی که برگزیده‌ای و پیشگو با گفتن اینکه برگزیده نیستی باعث شد که به خودت بیای و تواناییتو باور کنی»**	Which you exactly needed to hear. **“It means that you didn't believe that you were the chosen one and the prophet told you that you were not the chosen one and made you come to your senses and believe in your ability”**
That is the sound of inevitability.	01:57:59	این صدای اجتناب‌ناپذیریه* **«منظورش اینه که شکست شما انسان‌ها از ما ماشین‌ها اجتناب‌ناپذیره»**	That is the sound of inevitability. **“It means that the defeat of you humans against us machines is inevitable”**

-**The bold lines were added by the subtitler*

4.2. Expansion of acronyms

This section shows another feature of the subtitler’s distinct style. One of the stylistic characteristics of this subtitle is the expansion of all the acronyms. As was previously mentioned, due to time and

space constraints, subtitlers prefer not to expand the acronyms or even shorten the expanded form of the original into acronyms.

Table 3. Expansion of acronyms

Original Dialogue	Time	Subtitle	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle
That cracked the IRS D-base?	00:10:24	همونی که به IRS D-base نفوذ کرد؟ **«پایگاه داده درآمدِ خدماتِ داخلی»** **«آژانسی که مسئول جمع‌آوری مالیات و اجرای قوانینِ درآمد داخلیِ آمریکاست»**	That cracked the IRS D-base? **“Internal Revenue Service Database”** **“The agency responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing the internal revenue laws of the United States”**
Get some R and R?	00:09:14	یکم "الف ، ت"* میخوای؟ **«اصطلاحی در ارتش آمریکا برای نیروهایی که در عملیات بوده‌اند»** **«مخفف استراحت و تجدید قوا»**	Want some R and R? **“A term in the US military for troops who have been in operations”** **“Abbreviation of rest and recuperation”**
EMP armed...	01:00:10	...ای.ام.پی مسلح شده **«نوعی بمب بسیار پیشرفته که با انفجار خود پالس بزرگی را در محیط منتشر می‌کند که این پالس‌ها با نفوذ به سیستم‌های الکترونیکی قادر به تخریب عملکرد و از کار انداختن آنها میباشند»** **«در حال حاضر برخی کشورها چنین سلاحی را در اختیار دارند»**	EMP armed... **“A type of highly advanced bomb that emits a large pulse in the environment with its explosion, and these pulses are able to destroy and disable them by penetrating the electronic systems.”** **“Currently, some countries have such weapons”**

However, this subtitler not only expanded these acronyms, but also explained their meanings. Five acronyms were used in the film, all of which were expanded in the subtitled version. Some examples are presented in Table 3.

4.3. Addition of information

4.3.1. Names

In an interview, the directors were asked how they chose the characters' names. They declared that "the names were all chosen carefully, and all of them have multiple meanings"[4]. The subtitler seems to be aware of the significance of the characters' names as he decided to make the audience familiar with their meanings. Every key character's name has been selected thoughtfully to foreshadow something and prepare the audience for what is to be shown in subsequent scenes. The following examples are proofs of this claim:

Morpheus is the name of the Greek God of sleep who can bewitch people's minds with dreams, and here in the film, he tells Neo that he has been living in a dream world and helps him to change into The One (Bassham, 2002).

Neo, the name taken on by Thomas Anderson, is an anagram of "One." When Thomas Anderson claims this name, he becomes a "new man." In addition to defining the meaning of Neo, the subtitler adds that he is the one who saves all. This refers to Christians' belief that Jesus is the one who resurrects and saves humanity. As a result, the subtitler educated the audience on the concepts behind the names by inserting additional information.

Another example is the name *Trinity*: As Morpheus portrays God as the Father and Neo as the son of God, Trinity does it as Holy Spirit (Bassham, 2002).

As will be observed in Table 4, by informing the audience about the characters' names (e.g., Trinity), the subtitler introduced the Iranian audience to important concepts of Christianity. There were other purposefully selected names in the film too, such as *Cypher*[5] and *Thomas Anderson*, which were explained by Stucky (2005), but the subtitler provided no elaboration for those names. The reason for this might be that these names were not as important as other characters or that the subtitler himself was unaware of why the writers' named characters in this way.

Table 4. Addition of information (Names)

Original Dialogue	Time	Subtitle	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle
The name is Neo.	00:06:21	اسمش «نئو»*ـه	His name is Neo.

[4] https://www.matrixfans.net/movies/the-matrix/wachowski-brothers-chat-transcript/
[5] https://www.matrixfans.net/symbolism-philosophy-and-allegory/names/

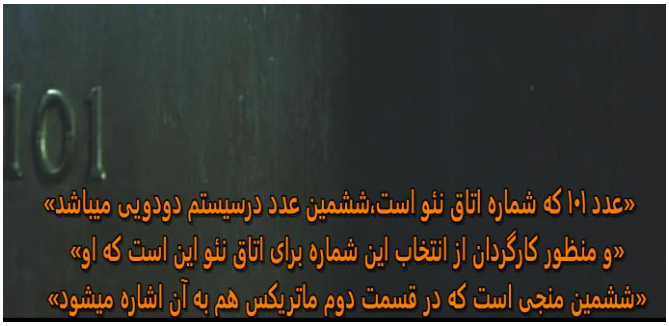
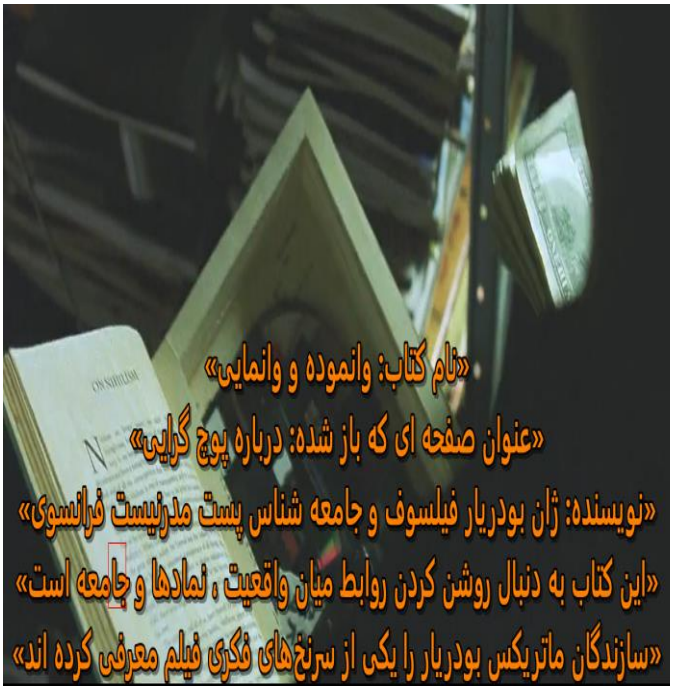
		«نام مستعار این شخص در فضای مجازی» «به معنی جدید ، یعنی این شخص منجی جدیده»	**“This person’s nickname in the cyberspace” “it means new, that is, this person is a new savior”**
You have to focus, Trinity.	00:03:36	باید حواست رو جمع کنی ترینیتی*	You need to concentrate, Trinity
		«اسم این خانم به معنی "تثلیث" هست «که یکی از اعتقادات اساسی مسیحی‌ها می‌باشد»	**“This lady’s name means “Trinity”, which is one of the fundamental beliefs of Christians”**
Nebuchadnezzar. It’s a hovercraft.	00:37:53	**«نَبوکدنصر(بُختنَصر) نام چند تن از پادشاهان بابل است و اولین حمله به هیکل (همان معبد سلیمان) یهودیان در اورشلیم و نابودی آن «و اسارت قوم یهود به یکی از آنان نسبت داده می‌شود»**	**“Nebuchadnezzar is the name of several kings of Babylon, and the first attack on the temple (the same temple of Solomon) of the Jews in Jerusalem and its destruction and the captivity of the Jewish people is attributed to one of them.”**
...the Oracle prophesied his return...	00:45:47	پیشگو [اُوراکل] بازگشت اون رو پیشگویی کرد.	The oracle foretold his return.
		«در یونان باستان اُوراکل به شخصی گفته میشد که از آینده خبر میداد و از جانب خدایان به او الهام میشد»	**“In ancient Greece, an oracle was a person who informed about the future and was inspired by the gods”**
...I am Morpheus.	00:25:56	من مورفیوس* هستم	I am Morpheus*
		مورفیوس به معنای کسی که شکل یا تغییرمی‌دهد. «خدای رؤیا در اسطوره‌های یونان باستان است»	**Morpheus means one who changes shapes. “He is the god of dreams in ancient Greek mythology”**

4.3.2. Graphics

Regarding the philosophical and religious references in *The Matrix*, there are some scenes in the film in which some objects are shown, and the subtitler, with detail, elaborates on what these objects refer

to and why the directors have chosen to include these objects; consequently, uncovering the film's ideologies. Some clues or subliminal messages reveal the directors' ideology, for instance:

Table 5. Addition of information (Graphics)

Scene	Time	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle
	00:08:05	"The number 101, which is Neo's room number, is the sixth number in the binary system." "And what the director means by choosing this number for Neo's room is that he is the sixth savior, which is also mentioned in the second part of The Matrix."
	00:08:26	"The name of the book: Simulacra and Simulation" "Title of the opened page: About Nihilism" "Author Jean Baudrillard, French postmodernist philosopher and sociologist" "This book seeks to clarify the relationship between reality, symbols, and society" "The creators of The Matrix have introduced Baudrillard as one of the intellectual clues of the film"
	00:38:09	"Written on the body of the hovercraft:" "Nebuchadnezzar, Made the US" "Year 2069"

Constant reference to Christ is a central religious motif in the film. Neo's messianic growth (in self-awareness and power) and his eventual bringing of peace and salvation to humanity form the film's plot. In one scene, some people come to his door, and Neo gives them a disk with the illegal software

they have asked for, and one person says (foreshadowing what is to come), "Hallelujah. You're my savior, man. My own personal Jesus Christ." (Stucky, 2005). As indicated in Table 5, Neo's room number is 101, and when the number 101 was shown in this scene, the subtitler added further information into the subtitle (Table 5).

In another scene, Neo takes out a disk from a hollowed-out book (Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulations*) which shows the audience that this is a postmodern book on the delusion of reality and that human experience is a simulation of reality. The chapter where they're hidden is called Nihilism[6]. The subtitler added this information to the subtitle (Table 5).

Nebuchadnezzar[7] was the Babylonian king who could not remember his dreams until Daniel interpreted them. Nebuchadnezzar also conquered Jerusalem (Zion) in the Old Testament, sending its people into exile. In *The Matrix*, the people of the subterranean Zion are free from the machines yet live in exile from the earth's surface (Bassham, 2002). Although in the film the Nebuchadnezzar's name was mentioned merely as the name of a hovercraft, the subtitler added more information about the historical background and significance of it (Table 5).

4.3.3. Explanation of words

Although subtitles appearing on the screen need to comply with constraints of time and space, the subtitler managed to insert the supplementing information, deviating from the norm and showing his distinct style, consequently revealing the film's ideology. In this section, the subtitler used an asterisk* for words he felt needed more explanation. Some examples are provided in Table 6.

According to one of the directors' interviews:

> *There are many wordplays, a lot of hidden other meanings, and a lot of multiple meanings. Besides that, we also like the definition, the mathematical definition of the use of Matrix, or the use of it in terms of a woman's womb*[8].

As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, the reason for the subtitler's explication of these words is evident now. Some of these words are listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Addition of information (Explanation of words)

Original Dialogue	Time	Subtitle	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle

[6] Nihilism often involves a sense of despair coupled with the belief that life is devoid of meaning.

[7] The Nebuchanezzer is indeed a biblical reference, from the book of Daniel by WachowskiBros (at the time) retrieved from https://www.matrixfans.net

[8] https://www.matrixfans.net/movies/the-matrix/wachowski-brothers-chat-transcript/

Listen, coppertop.	00:23:14	گوش کن باتری! *	Listen coppertop!*
		«در این فیلم به معنی coppertop افرادی است که به ماتریکس وصل هستند و مانند باتری انرژی آن را تامین میکنند»	**“In this movie, coppertop means people who are connected to the matrix and provide it with energy like a battery”**
- What’s that?	00:24:10	این چیه؟	What is this?
- You're bugged.		فکر میکنیم تو بدنت حشره * گذاشتن	We think they put an insect in your body
		«وسیله ای برای ردیابی»	**“a tool for tracking”**
- I got a fibrillation.	00:32:08	عضلاتش بد جوری منقبض شدن ایپاک، محل*	His muscles are contracting badly Apoc, location*
- Apoc, location.		**«میخوان محل محفظه‌ای که نئو درش قرار داده شده رو پیدا کنن»**	**“They want to find the location of the container where Neo was placed”**
Your appearance now is what we call "residual self-image."	00:40:02	ظاهر تو الآن چیزیه که ما بهش میگیم "تصوّر باقی‌مانده از خویش*"	Your appearance now is what we call it “Remaining image of self*”
		«ظاهری ذهنی از انسان در حالی که به ماتریکس متصل است»	**“A mental representation of a human while connected to the matrix”**
It is the mental projection of your digital self.	00:40:06	این یه طرح ذهنی از خودِ دیجیتالی* توئه	This is a mental projection of your digital self*
		«یعنی ظاهریه که خودت تو دنیای دیجیتالی»	**“It means that you appear to be in the digital world”**
		«برای خودت ساختی، مثل آواتار»	**“You made it for yourself, like an avatar”**

It exists now only as part of a neural-interactive simulation...	00:40:42	که الان تنها چیزی که ازش باقی مونده یه شبیه‌سازی عصبیِ تعاملیـه* **«الگویی برای پردازش اطلاعات که با تقلید از شبکه‌های عصبی بیولوژیکی مغز انسان ساخته شده»**	Now the only thing left is an interactive neural simulation* **"A model for information processing made by mimicking the biological neural networks of the human brain"**

4.4. Explanation of allusions

This film contains many allusions and cultural references, the origins and context of which the subtitler decided to explain (Table 7).

Table 7. Explanation of allusions

Original Dialogue	Time	Subtitle	Back Translation of the Persian Subtitle
...tumbling down the rabbit hole?	00:26:28	از سوراخ خرگوش* سُر خوردی افتادی پایین؟ **«آلیس در اون داستان از سوراخ خرگوش سفید سُر میخوره و داخل سرزمین عجایب میوفته»**	Did you slip down the rabbit hole*? **"In that story, Alice goes down the white rabbit hole and falls into the wonderland"**
You take the red pill...	00:29:12	اگه قرص قرمز* رو انتخاب کنی **«قرص قرمز استعاره‌ای است از داستان فریب آدم توسط شیطان»** **«در تورات که به «سیب سرخ حوا» مشهور است. خوردن آن سیب قرمز بازشدن چشم بصیرت و معرفت آدم شد. اینجا نیز نئو با خوردن قرص قرمز نسبت به حقیقت زندانی بودن در ماتریکس شناخت و معرفت پیدا میکند»**	If you choose the red pill*, **"The red pill is a metaphor for the story of Satan's deception of man"** **"In the Torah, it is known as the "Eve's red apple". Eating that red apple opened the eyes of Adam. Here too, by taking the red pill, Neo learns about the reality of being imprisoned in the matrix"**

...you stay in Wonderland...	00:29:14	تو سرزمین عجایب* باقی میمونی **«اشاره مجدد به داستان آلیس در سرزمین عجایب»**	You will remain in the wonderland* **“A re-reference to the story of Alice in Wonderland”**
It means buckle your seatbelt, Dorothy...	00:30:36	یعنی کمربندت رو محکم ببند دروتی* **«اشاره به شخصیت اول رمان جادوگر شهر اُز نوشته ال. فرانک باوم»**	It means buckle your seatbelt, Dorothy... **“Reference to the first character of the novel The Wizard of Oz written by L. Frank Baum”**
...because Kansas is going bye-bye...	00:30:39	چون باید با کانزاس خداحافظی کنی **«دروتی در اون کتاب اهل کانزاس در آمریکا بود و از اونجا به اُز رفت»**	Because you have to say goodbye to Kansas **“Dorothy in that book was from Kansas in America and went to Oz from there”**
Genuine child of Zion.	00:47:09	بچه‌های واقعیِ صَهیون(زایان* **«این کلمه نزد یهودیان به‌معنای شهر اورشلیم است ولی درمتونِ دینیِ یهود، "صهیون" به آرمان و آرزوی ملت یهود برای بازگشت به سرزمین موعود [اسرائیل] و تجدید دولت یهود اشاره دارد.** **«واژۀ "صهیونیزم" از مشتقات همین کلمه می‌باشد»**	The real children of Zion* **“This word means the city of Jerusalem among Jews, but in Jewish religious texts, “Zion” refers to the ideal and desire of the Jewish nation to return to the promised land [Israel] and renew the Jewish state.** **“The word “Zionism” is a derivative of this word”**
Ignorance is bliss.	01:04:17	سعادت در جهالت ـه* **«جمله معروف توماس گری شاعر مشهور انگلیسی»**	Ignorance is bliss* **“The famous sentence of the famous English poet Thomas Gray”** **“The original sentence: where happiness is in ignorance, Tis folly to be wise”**

«اصل جمله: جایی که سعادت در جهالت است، عاقل بودن حماقت است»

The Matrix makes several important references to *Alice in Wonderland.* Similar to Alice, Neo had to face his new reality. The subtitler decided to openly explain the origins of these references to inform the audience of the connections between these stories and the film. It shows how the topic of reality versus imagination appears in *Alice in Wonderland, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and *The Matrix*. One example is that in the film, *Zion* is a city where people awakened from *The Matrix* live and fight (Zion was another name for Jerusalem in the Bible) (Stucky, 2005). The subtitler not only translated the word to *Zayan*, but also elaborated on what it really meant and why the director purposefully selected this name for this city.

Another example is when Cypher declares "ignorance is bliss". The subtitler could only translate the sentence. However, he wrote the entire quotation and the author's name. By doing so, he draws the viewers' attention to this scene and the philosophy behind the dialogue.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that film's underlying ideology could be transferred to the target audience through the conscious stylistic choices of the subtitler. Although Fodor (1975) argues that subtitles are constrained due to space, time, and image synchrony, in the current research the subtitler was shown to explicate the dialogues that he believed needed more explanation. Moreover, Koolstra et al. (2002) stated that subtitles tend to be condensed, and some information may be lost or the information that the subtitle presents has an equal value as the original spoken text; however, in the present subtitle, not only was little information lost, but also some additional information helped disambiguate the original.

The standard subtitling practice encourages omission, reduction, and gist translation (Cintas & Anderman, 2009). Nonetheless, the style of this subtitler was different as he used a variety of stylistic strategies, namely the explication of dialogues, expansion of acronyms, the addition of information, and explanation of allusions to address the film's underlying ideology more clearly. Although denotative meanings can be translated, the inherent and underlying areas and networks cannot (Cao, 2014). However, in this subtitle, the subtitler tried to shed light on those connected networks of values and familiarize the target viewers with the directors' doctrine of thought. As Cao (2014) states, translators inevitably put their understanding and interpretation, even their language style, life experience, and personality, in their literary translation. Similarly, the subtitler, in the studied case, inserted interpretations into his subtitle that he deemed necessary for the sake of audience's full comprehension.

In addition, the directors pointed to the ideology (i.e., set of beliefs and values) of *The Matrix* in various scenes through dialogues, verbal and non-verbal signs, and imageries. The subtitler in this study was relatively aware of the ideological environment of the film, attempted to clarify those beliefs which

might not be transparent to the target audience at first glance, and tried to transfer them to the target. His style of subtitling may be regarded as creative subtitling. As McClarty (2012) argues, creative subtitling differs from the norm and encompasses more than its own discipline and culture.

It may be rightfully argued that this subtitle, due to its length and limited screen time appearance, needed to be constantly paused by the audience if they were to read the whole lines, and this would distract the viewers and turn the film into a teaching course. However, it should be kept in mind that these kinds of subtitles have been produced for addressees, some of whom might watch the film multiple times, participate in online forums about the film, recommend these subtitles to other fans, and even demand subtitles of other films to be provided by the same subtitler. As Bartoll (2004) believes, parameters such as language, purpose, addressee, time, and, to a lesser degree, the product to be subtitled affect the subtitler's work. In the same vein, it seems that the subtitler in the present study wanted to produce a subtitle aimed at special addressees who were real fans of the film, and the philosophical nature of this film allowed this kind of subtitling. Some AV products could be subtitled differently due to their specific qualities; AV products such as films/series based on comic books (e.g., Marvel and DC cinematic world) could be accompanied by brief introductions and explanations about superheroes from the original comic books; fantasy films (e.g., Lord of the Rings and Hobbit) could be accompanied by background or genealogy of the characters and their homelands; philosophical-religious films (e.g., *The Mother*) could be accompanied by in/direct references to the Holy books. These AV products could be subtitled like the understudied subtitle in our research, and be specially targeted towards fans who do not want to miss any detail about the films/series. Bartoll (2004) continues that the addressee is a parameter affecting both the technique and the relationship between the source and target languages. He categorized addressees into three categories: people with or without impaired hearing, people who do not know the language, and students and children. He claims that these addressees influence the production of subtitles. However, it seems that in our case, there is a fourth category known as fans. This kind of subtitling may be disturbing to regular spectators; however, real fans are likely to enjoy and even demand these kinds of subtitles.

In line with the further definition of "translation of ideology" by Fang (2011) as the voluntary activity of translators as agents, the results of this study showed that the subtitler provided a foreign-culture-friendly subtitle favoring the ideology of the film. The subtitler provided a translation according to the ideological setting of the film, not based on the setting in which he performed. Regardless of the filmmakers' actual intentions, the subtitler's aim was to facilitate the comprehensive understanding of the audience. The subtitler revealed his translatorial style, which in many cases differs from subtitling norms and guidelines. His unique style was apparent in the explication of dialogues, the expansion of acronyms, the addition of information, and the explanation of allusions. Moreover, it could be inferred through (e.g., the linguistic choices of the subtitler and the provision of additional information) that being faithful to the original and granting a comprehensive cinematic experience to the audience were seemingly among the subtitler's priorities.

Further studies are required on translatorial style in subtitling and how ideological stances can be maintained, transferred, and even highlighted through subtitling as a form of AVT. Through such studies, researchers could begin drawing a clearer picture of the interplay between style and the

translation of ideology in AV products. The reception of different subtitling styles could also be examined by AVT researchers.

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Review of *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror Meditations through Migration*, Edited by Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl, ISBN: 978-0-367-56911-2, Routledge. 2022.

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During the dark retinue of Nazi (1933-1945) in Germany, many innocent people lost their lives, and many were forcibly exiled from their home countries (Bazyler & Alford, 2007 & Mayda, 2010). This unwanted upsurge of immigration resulted in the clash of different cultures and languages. New immigrants' adaptation to the host culture(s) remains a contentious hence uncharted line of research. The key question at stake is how refugees deal with ethnic, religious, and cultural affiliations in their target destinations and how they portray knowledge transfer and cultural translations.

Spotting this obvious gap, the current edited volume is a nascent call for further study. Under the general editorship of Korbel and Strobl, this volume offers the vital role of artistic and academic refugees from national socialism acting as cultural mediators between different cultures to agents of knowledge between their home and host communities. It investigates the Exiners and Chaimowiczs who were fiercely expelled from their homeland and forced to embark on a new life elsewhere. The impetus behind publishing this stimulating work of scholarship stems from the fact that it examines, at length and in detail, the hybrid ways through which refugees directed and mediated their immigration and how they portrayed their immigration in their art and science as well as translation. The ensemble of eleven case studies presents an overview of the various aspects of knowledge mediation, cultural translation, and immigration from central Europe and beyond.

This value laden manuscript is best located in the critical nexus between burgeoning history of knowledge, transnational history, and exile, on the one hand, and cultural transfer studies and translation, on the other hand. Throughout the chapters, the authors deal thoroughly with the ways in which refugees envisaged, organized and mediated their immigration and how they portrayed themselves in the target culture through translation. Structurally framed into three parts that are further subsumed into 13 case studies, the current edited volume adds enormously to the existing literature in this area of knowledge. The authors have successfully convened a lineup of preeminent scholars to compile a trendsetting work of scholarship that pushes the boundaries in strand of research.

The first part of the volume is thematically split into four case studies that delve into the general concepts of network, family, friendship, and relations. The authors of this part retell stories of people who had to leave their home countries and unwantedly act as translators as well as cultural mediators in different languages. The chapters of the first part run gamut of thematic issues of immigration, expel and exile, war and cultural mediation in different geographical contexts including Australia, China, and Germany.

In the first chapter, Bienmann conducts an inquiry into the biography of a Jewish family. The inquiry shines light on the way the family used their Jewishness to migrate to fascist Italy and the United States, among others. In the subsequent chapter, Finder investigates the life of Jakob Rosenfeld, a bourgeois Jewish physician in inter-war Vienna who was exiled from his home country of Australia, migrated to China, and passed away in Israel. Finder explores how Rosenfeld's valuable experiences gained during his time in the army helped him function as a mediator between Chinese, central European, and Jewish cultures. The chapter concludes that his Jewish spirit is a key to understanding Jakob Rosenfeld's strong feelings in his political propensity to the liberation army.

In the next chapter, Prager discusses Slaka Viertel, an actress who has lived transnationally in four countries. Prager focuses on Viertel's life as a case study with the prime purpose of comparing

gendered images in the USA and Europe. Having spent years in places as diverse as Galicia, Vienna, Berlin and California, Viertel exemplifies a refugee who had to function as a mediator between Europe and the United States. The last chapter by Steinberg analyses German publications on the topic of exile. He sheds light on the aspects of refugee movement from central Europe in the 1930s and 1940s and how this collective thread has been represented in German-speaking press.

Under the title of Strategies of Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer, the second part of the edited volume consists of four units focusing on cultural translation and knowledge mediation from Central Europe to geographically various parts of the world. Andrea Strutz scrutinizes selected biographies of refugees (six case studies) from Austria, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. By analyzing the knowledge background of six influential figures in art and music, Strutz demonstrates that individuals' prior knowledge and area of expertise were of great assistance for them to trigger their careers in the new cultural venue.

By the same token, Kathrin touches upon the issue of refugees from central Europe in Portugal with a designated focus on the role of women. The impetus of this research was the excursion of Refugees after Hitler came into power in the 1930s. Among these refugees were artists seen as reminiscent of art and modernity in the host culture. However, these refugees had a negligible impact on the target society as they believed their stay in Portugal was temporary. Of this wave of refugees, only a fraction ended up staying in Portugal. This chapter concludes that due to the significant differences between the refugees and the majority of the Portuguese population, they left in pursuit of a new land where they could be better acclimatized to the host culture. In the last chapter of the second part, Andrea Meyer Ludowisy retells the story of William Rose, a preeminent British translator, who functioned as a principal actor in creating and leading the network of German-speaking writers and poets who migrated to the UK during the Second World War. Ludowisy successfully sheds light on the complexity of cultural translation and how knowledge transfer can be facilitated by a third party.

As part of a broad and comprehensive study on the effects of Jewish immigrants and Holocaust survivors, the third part of this volume by Cooke and Hirsh deals with actors of transfer and mediation. The authors utilize the transnational life of Louis Kahan to unearth the reception of his artistic works in various contexts. By reading Jewish émigré designers as well as a close reading of their work, Cooke and Hirsh conclude that the networks created by refugees had massive impacts on Nazism and Holocaust as demonstrated in their artistic works.

The last part of this edited volume includes four chapters which center on actors of transfer and mediation. Steven Cooke and Anna Hirsh write a chapter about unveiling the effects of Louis Kahan a refugee artist, custom and fashion designer who had to flee Vienna with the destination being Australia. He had to witness the war for many years as he was a member of French Foreign Legion in North Africa. The artistic life of Kahan and his transnational life is a pertinent way of exploring the reception of his works in transnational contexts as well as uncovering how his invaluable trainings, artistic works and practices accompanied him in his long and bizarre journey.

In the same fashion, Jeremy Leong investigates the artistic works of Erwin Felber, a Vienna-born refugee who gained the position of music professorship at Shanghai University. Felber was among the many refugees who decided to stay in China after the war and gain an academic job there. Leong

demonstrates that the music was far more than a source of entertainment and enjoyment in the refugee society. It served to attest the cultural identity of the refugees in an unfamiliar Sinitic milieu. Wieder's chapter familiarizes readers with the exile experiences of Hedy Krilla who had sublime experience as an actor in pre-Nazi Austria, Germany, and France before he had to leave Europe. In her new destination in Argentina, not only did she become a very well-known actress in German and French speaking communities, but also he could find her way to exploit her exile experience to facilitate the modernization of an independent theater in Argentina.

Markus Helmut Lenhart investigates the lives and firsthand experiences of Melitta and Victor Urbancic who fled from Vienna to Iceland in 1938. Working as composer, conductor, teacher and music scholar, this study shows how they managed to mediate and utilize effectively their musical knowledge gained in central Europe to become an integral part of postwar Iceland. The last chapter of the third part deals with the challenges of Arnold Schoenberg in the new context of exiled composers in America. Melina Paetzold focuses on Ingolf Dahl (1912–1970), a multifaceted musician unknown in Europe, but famous in America- and his alternative approach to cultural and knowledge transfer between central Europe and the United States. More specifically, Paetzold deals with the question of how Dahl, through his translations and teachings, impacted the music scene in America. The writer of the chapter concludes that because of his latent artistic talents, Dahl could reach a wide audience who helped him create a critical interconnectedness between central Europe and America in terms of knowledge transfer.

Through the chapters, it becomes obvious that this gripping book is an excellent fit for researchers of the history of World War two in Europe and history of arts and their critical rapport with translation. In addition, kudos must be given to the high quality of the print which makes reading this book enjoyable. This book has a lot to offer to bridge the wide gap in history, arts and translation; however, it fails to provide competent readers with a chance to embark on empirical research on areas like immigration, translation, history and culture. Therefore, this book is of little value to those who do research-based studies in translation. Considering the content of the book as well as the topics, it becomes immediately conspicuous that this book is geared to the expert in such fields as cultural translation and history and has little value, if any, to the newcomers in these strands of research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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